

The Week

HOME 1-4

DES draws up average cost scheme to fund polytechnics and colleges
Most universities will become leisure schools, international seminar is told
Enlarged bursary scheme for overseas students would be bureaucratic and expensive. MPs are warned
SSRC tells Scarman inquiry that white institutions fall to help young blacks

NORTH AMERICA

Fruit fly spraying endangers research at Stanford
College presidents indicted in study visa fraud
Mathematician's death sparks row over foreign informers on American campuses

OVERSEAS

New law in Chile will bring universities under tighter control
Violent protests by Sri Lankan students

ARTICLES

1-12

Industry and higher education: reports from Sheffield Polytechnic and Brunel University, 7

Patricia Santinelli examines new research on youth unemployment, 8
Peter David looks at the revival of Mass Observation, 9

Clive Church asks whether European studies can survive waning interest in the Common Market, 10

Community Colleges: Andrew Goodman on America's lessons for Britain, 11

John Warren and Peter Copping review the prospects for reform in engineering education, 12

BOOKS

13-17

T. D. Campbell on James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition (13); Alan Rodway on Shelley (14); John Mayberry on mathematics (16)

NOTICEBOARD

18

CLASSIFIED INDEX

19

OPINION

22-24

William Taylor asks how academe will come to terms with retirement;
Robert Browning discusses the intellectual moonlighters of Birkbeck and Don's Diary from Bill Knight of Borno College, Nigeria, 22
Neil Macfarlane of the Association of Polytechnic Teachers looks at research in the polytechnics; letters on the University of London and social science and the inner cities, 23

Next Week

Douglas Bethlehem on the defence of university values
Graham Hallett on the crisis in economics

J. R. Watson reviews *The Victorian Countryside*
Peter David on the Green Paper on the public sector

Robin McKie reports from Nice on alternative futures

© TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED, 1981
Published by Times Newspapers, PO Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, England. Typesetting by ComputerGraphics, 35-41 Compton St., London EC1, and printed by Northampton Victory Co. Ltd., 31, Market Street, Northampton NN1 2SR, England. July 31, 1981. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN 0950-4574.



HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT
200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. Telephone 01-8371234

Counting jobs isn't everything

To seek to justify university education in general, or to prefer one university to another, on the basis of the apparent ease with which their graduates find jobs is an obvious, but also a misleading, and even a dangerous, defence. This is not intended as a criticism of Salford University's new campaign to counter-attack the UGC, although its campaign is very much biased towards this particular defence. Indeed, Salford's vigour and resilience are to be admired. If more universities had behaved like Salford over the past few years (if Salford past had behaved like Salford present) and come out fighting, the first is that they measure not differences between universities so much as differences between subjects. What they really describe is the subject balance within institutions, not the quality of the teaching within individual universities or even its relevance to industrial practice.

The second aspect is perhaps more significant. Crude employment rates measure two things: the opportunities open to graduates (their attractiveness to industry) and also their own willingness to accept employment (their own expectations of the labour market). It is impossible to be sure how much weight to attach to the former and how much to the latter. A very high employability rate therefore may reflect either that particular graduates are very attractive to industry or that they have lower than average expectations about the jobs they can get.

This is particularly important in explaining the rather unexpected differences in employment rates between universities. After all, a student who has passed through a department with very high academic standards and a reputation for excellence in research may have very different expectations about suitable employment than a student who has passed

through a department that mostly offers sandwich courses in strictly vocational subjects. Of course, it can be argued that the nation needs the latter more than the former. But even that argument is not secure. The former may actually be a higher quality graduate who is able to make a more important contribution to industry after he has taken three or six months to purge himself of the hopeless ambition of becoming a research scientist. So all the employment rates may be measuring is a brief although no doubt painful period of readjustment to more realistic expectations.

The third difficulty is the most profound of all. To take employment rates among graduates as a measure of a university's "success" is to let industry set the standard of excellence to which universities should aspire. It is to say, implicitly but firmly, that industry knows best - when the experience of the last quarter of a century has shown all too sadly that industry, at any rate in Britain, does not know best. Seen in this larger context, producing graduates who are readily acceptable to industry may be a measure of their mediocrity not their quality, of their conformity not their creativity.

But there is an even larger issue. What about all those students in the humanities and social sciences who also make a great contribution to the future of our society (often in a severely economical fashion), but whose contribution cannot easily be reduced to a check list of recent employment rates among graduates and of eye-catching gadget-inventions? Indeed, it is really healthy to try to justify the modern mission of the university within such a framework of learning, culture, civilization as much as they are about jobs.

measures are to be the employability of its graduates or the salary differentials they enjoy over non-graduates.

But this general explanation does not account for the differences between the employment rates of graduates from different universities, the enthusiasts for such league tables will argue. Here is the second difficulty. Statistics do not necessarily lie, but very often they over-simplify a complicated set of circumstances and so convey a misleading impression about the truth. In the case of employment statistics about university graduates, this has two aspects. The first is that they measure not differences between universities so much as differences between subjects.

What they really describe is the subject balance within institutions, not the quality of the teaching within individual universities or even its relevance to industrial practice.

Laurie Taylor



Darling?
Yes, my love.
I thought we'd agreed to read light this year.
That's right. Much the best way I've cut down to an absolute minimum.
But we still seem to have two suitcases, a holdall and four shoulder bags.

Is there anything which is essential?

Well, do you really have to take quite so many books?

What do you mean, sweetest? "Quite so many?"

Well, so many that it's almost impossible to lift this suitcase without the help of a fork-lift truck.

I'm sorry, my love, but I've been through them at least a dozen times. All essential. Reference books, but ground reading. It's got to be a holiday, you know.

What's so essential about the great fat thing?

What's that?

A bound volume entitled, *The Impact of the Liberal Party on British Political Life, 1971-73*.

Oh that. It's a thesis, PhD, you know.

Well, it doesn't sound like a very away bestseller. But why don't you have to come to Italy with us?

I'm the external examiner. I have to assess it. Maintain standards, that sort of thing.

But you never do. Last year you carried three of the damn things over a thousand miles and not once ever saw the light of day.

Well, no.
And then we had to lug at least a dozen reference books to your proposed seminar article on *The Possibility of a New Centre Party in British Politics*. Somehow we never got round to that, did we?

I thought about it a bit. Got a few ideas going. It's a priority item this year.

Then three turgid books for review in *The Political Science Quarterly*. Just sat unopened on the villa floor. Only two this year.

Not to mention a *Rogers' Thesaurus* which never moved out of the living room mantlepiece.

True. But aren't you forgetting something yourself?

I think not.
World Classics?
Pardon.

Wasn't there someone last year who decided to catch up on his literature? Four fat Penguin Classics: *Ulysses*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Ulysses* and *War and Peace*. Your shoulder bag was more than full.

Bleak House. And as you know, it was just a little too late for your concentrated reading year for concentrated reading.

And what about *Introduction to Geology* and *Elizabeth David's Cookbooks*?
I used that. It was absolutely essential.

Only for tomatoes, vinegar and what we knew that already.

Do you know something, darling? I don't want to create a scene. But I think that now after ten years of marriage it's about time we came to an important decision. I think the moment has come to take separate holidays.

Separate?
Yes. You and I will buy a couple of deckchairs and sit quietly in the back garden reading *The Sunday Times* while the books go off alone for a fortnight in Tuscany.

The Times Higher Education Supplement

August 7, 1981 No 457 Price 45p

London University: Lord Annan replies, 11

J. D. Watson on the Victorian countryside, 13

Peter David on the DES and local authorities, 7

Graham Hallett criticizes A level economics, 10

UGC cuts based on out-of-date information

by Ngao Creguer

The University Grants Committee failed to visit departments it wants to axe in some cases for 11 years and others for six, a *THES* survey has revealed.

A review of the five universities worst hit by the UGC cuts shows that the subject sub-committees, which were given a new, far more positive role in advising how the cuts should be implemented, had woefully out-of-date first-hand information.

Only last year the UGC told the Commons education select committee that subject visits were made to departments every three or four years. And in their recent appearance at the committee, members stressed that they had examined subject provision over the whole system, rather than looked at institutions.

But at Aston University, where the UGC recommends an end to biological sciences, the sub-committee's last visit was in 1970. The last visit for education, also to be discontinued, was in the same year. Mathematics, where a decrease is recommended, was last visited in 1974, and the small human communications course, which the UGC labelled as philosophy and which it also wants discontinued, has never been visited.

At Bradford, where the UGC wants a substantial reduction in physical sciences, the last visit was a regional meeting in Hull in 1975. Biological sciences, recommended to be phased out, was also last visited in 1975 and in education, due to be

discontinued, a spokesman said: "We swear we have never been visited." It sometimes works the other way. Business and management, due for a small increase, was also last visited six years ago.

At Salford, where a significant decrease is proposed in engineering, the technology sub-committee has not visited since 1970. The arts committee's last visit was in 1977: here many arts subjects are recommended to be discontinued.

The business and management sub-committee (substantial reduction) visited in 1978, and according to the university said it had been favourably impressed by the quality and commitment of staff and students. They were encouraged by the UGC to think of themselves as a distinctive sort of business studies department, which boosted staff morale.

The worst example at Stirling is in the social studies, proposed for a reduction in numbers, but last visited in 1971. Although the main UGC committee has visited these institutions since some of these dates, because all subjects are covered, such visits are only routine.

The UGC letter to Keele shows considerable ignorance of the way the university operates. It says it endorses university proposals for a shift of emphasis from social studies to the arts. But a spokesman said: "That is absolutely wrong. We have never suggested any sort of shift."

The letter also says further consideration should be given to phasing out the four-year courses. In fact the four-year nature of Keele's degree



courses makes it distinctive in the country, and almost half of all students take a foundation year. The university now understands that the UGC does not especially want the foundation year dropped and they have asked for clarification.

Scotland comes out particularly badly in the visits. At Aberdeen, the last visit to the Italian department (discontinued) was pre-1976, since when all the staff are new and have not met the UGC. At St Andrews, where mathematical sciences is to be reduced, the last visit was in 1969.

The arts visit, where music, linguistics and archaeology are all to be axed, was in 1970. The arts committee last visited Strathclyde (decrease recommended) in 1974, and the

same is true of mathematical sciences. At Heriot-Watt there has not been an arts visit in the 11 years the language department (now severely threatened) has been going.

Last year the UGC told MPs that sub-committee reports were being fed into the present exercise in the detailed discussions with the universities, and sub-committees would be looking into potential needs of subject areas.

The education select committee has asked Mr Mark Carlisle to produce two letters sent to him by the UGC warning the Government about the effects of the proposed cuts.

In September it will re-examine the whole status of the UGC and has asked Mr Carlisle to appear.

Union forces university to maintain intake

A threat by university teachers to take out an injunction against Surrey University has forced it to revoke a decision to reduce its intake of new students to nil in three departments.

Solicitors acting on behalf of the Association of University Teachers wrote to Surrey to say that the decision to reduce the intake in the departments of microbiology, philosophy and psychology was unlawful.

The letter said that as the decision was made by the university council, without reference to senate, the academic body, it was *ultra vires*. "In those circumstances, it would be unlawful for the university to seek to take any steps to implement the decision, which is a nullity."

Unless the university confirmed it would not implement the decision, the AUT had given instructions that "proceedings be taken to obtain an injunction or any necessary remedy to prevent implementation of the decision."

The university said this week that Surrey guaranteed its commitments to all October 1981 entry students. The situation regarding the academic and financial implications of the cuts was under review.

It is understood that at one stage the university proposed that all incoming microbiology students should be told they could transfer to another university, transfer to another Surrey course, or be advised that the four year course would only last three years and recommend the student not to take up the place.

Bradford University was this week discussing the cuts and a senate general committee was due to consider a plan to persuade 60 teaching staff to leave the university.

Compulsory job losses 'inevitable'

by David Jobbins

Compulsory redundancies and a dramatic fall in the number of qualified students entering polytechnics and colleges are the admitted consequences of the Government's relentless pressure on local authority budgets.

Local authority leaders have advised ministers that the 19 per cent cut in lecturers in advanced further education sought by the Department of Education cannot be achieved by natural wastage and voluntary redundancy.

They are also desperately worried that the cuts must be compressed into what they protest is an impossible short timeframe.

The DES wants the 27,800 AFE lecturers employed in January this year reduced by 5,800 to 22,500 in 1983-84.

London business school to offer US degrees

by Paul Flather

A private London business college is to offer degree courses allowing students to gain qualifications which are fully accredited by American professional bodies and two American universities.

The Centre for Business Studies claims its scheme, which will start next month, as a major initiative in Anglo-American co-operation. It could start a trend among other private colleges already well placed to undercut universities and polytechnics in the overseas-student market.

Papers prepared for this week's stormy meeting between Department of the Environment minister Mr Tom King and local authority leaders predict a worsening of the student-staff ratio from 9:1 this year to 10:1 in 1983-84. But more disturbing is the forecast that the age participation rate will fall to 11.5 per cent by 1984-85, a reduction of two per cent over a decade in which Britain has slipped further down the international league table of those qualified for higher education actually entering it.

The Association of County Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the Local Authorities Conditions of Service Advisory Board are to discuss a redundancy scheme.

Early indications that 100 or more college lecturers were leaving the service by such means over the past

year cannot be substantiated, although there are firm examples such as Middlesex and North East London Polytechnics where premature retirement compensation has been fully exploited.

Lecturers aged over 50 were thought to be taking PRC because a compulsory scheme looked far off the exact opposite of the universities' experience. But another factor which may slow down retirements is the delay over allowing the costs of such schemes to be borne by the uncrapped pool.

Although the pooling committee has recommended that a large proportion of the costs can be carried by the pool, the DES has said that the earliest possible date for this to happen is the end of March next year. Authorities are therefore tempted to go slow on processing applications.

Labour reveals training plans for 16-19 year olds

Patricia Santinelli

A Labour government would make it compulsory for all 16-17 year olds to receive education and training from the mid-1980s, according to confidential recommendations which have yet to be approved by the party's national executive.

It would also instigate a reform of sixth form examinations with a view to abolishing A levels. Its aim would be a two year predominantly academic route to higher education. There would be credit links a one year 17-plus course, alongside which would be vocational routes to higher education and the professions.

The proposals have been prepared by a party working group on the education and training of the 16-19 age group which aims to introduce a programme of unified vocational preparation.

Under such a scheme those in education would receive a non-means tested allowance paid directly, and estimated to cost some £400m a year. Those in employment would receive a negotiated wage and the unemployed might receive a proportion of such a wage.

The first step taken by a Labour government would be to give all 16-17 year-olds in employment the right to a national award and training which would be enforceable on employers.

It would not seek compulsory day release for the time being.

The second step would be to radically develop the Youth Opportunities Programme within such a training scheme and provide education and training for young unemployed so that they could easily transfer to a job with education and training or to a further education course.

Meanwhile it is likely that the Labour Party will recommend a massive expansion of YOP, relaunching it as a 12-month programme which would take in not only 18 year olds but those previously on schemes who have remained unemployed.

The universal vocational preparation would link education at school with working life and would include continuing education and training.

There would be bridges between courses whether academic or vocational, full or part-time and easy transfer between the different levels and types of courses. The latter would be structured around modules and introduce a national system of credit transfer covering all existing and any new schemes.

A national credit transfer scheme is seen as essential and under a Labour government a Tertiary Education Awards Council would be established to oversee it.

Prisoner is refused grant

by David Jobbins

A 1960s drop-out serving an eight-year sentence in Dartmoor for drug offences has been refused a mandatory award to study sociology at Bath University.

Wiltshire County Council has told the prisoner, who is 35 and has served almost 4½ years of his sentence, that he has shown himself by his conduct to be unfit to receive an award.

Without finance he fears that the parole board will not be prepared to sanction his release to take up a place which has been held open for him for two years.

The county council's awards sub-committee has twice considered the application, and twice turned it down. "The committee's decision as far as this council is concerned is

final," the chief education officer, Mr R. C. R. Blackledge, wrote.

On behalf of the prisoner, William Leach, a National Union of Students caseworker told the education authority he was repaying his debt to society and believed himself genuinely reformed.

"Surely he deserves the right to rehabilitate himself into society. Otherwise his punishment and subsequent re-evaluation of his lifestyle will have been wasted and he will have been punished twice for his original crime," she said.

The NUS is concerned that Wiltshire has invoked a rarely-used power to withhold a grant. The union has protested to the Department of Education and Science at the "apparent moral judgment and precedent

setting" and fears that it could be used to prevent others from entering higher education.

Because the would-be student is in Dartmoor he was unable to appear in person before the committee to appeal against their first decision.

In a letter on prison notepaper, he wrote: "I have never been in prison before and the principal effect has been to reform my life."

The man, who is married with two children, said he dropped out of a business career in 1968 under the influence of radical politics and soft drugs. "One day we were in the vanguard of a new world - the next we were left-over social deviants."

He has collected 2½ credits with the Open University since the beginning of his sentence, and is currently studying for 1½ more.



Playwright Tom Stoppard, (left) historian A. J. P. Taylor, (right) and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector Miss Sheila Browne with vice chancellor Mr Jack Butterworth after receiving honorary degrees from Warwick University.

MPs demand details of £60m grant

MPs and union leaders this week demanded to know how the extra £60m promised by the Government to help more youngsters to stay on in education is to be allocated.

The money for 1982/83 to enable around 50,000 more young people to stay on was part of a £500m package unveiled by the Prime Minister last week during a debate in the Commons.

But neither Mrs Thatcher nor Mr Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education gave any details. At first it was thought the cash would be the rate support grant but later it was implied the money would be processed under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act, although this is designed specifically for Commonwealth immigrants.

Mr Christopher Price, MP, chairman of the Commons Select Committee on Education and Mr Mick Farley, assistant secretary of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education have written to Mr Carlisle asking for clarification.

In his letter Mr Price has told the Secretary of State that the committee will be asking him for evidence of the expenditure of the £60m when he faces the committee in November or December but meanwhile MPs would like to know whether money is to come through the RSG.

Natfhe deplors the delay in allocating the funds since education authorities are facing immediate pressures and asks whether the extra money is from the treasury or represents an authorisation for i.e.s to spend it.

If funds were to be made available under section 11, this would technically require new legislation to remove the present regulations which restricts it to Commonwealth immigrants.

Lecturers told to be more political

by Paul Flather

Social work lecturers are being urged to be more active politically in the face of government cuts which are hitting university and college teaching as well as social work provision.

Some lecturers are now calling for the creation of an organized lobby to defend the profession against cuts, while other academics want changes in the teaching curricula to emphasize qualities needed to cope with recession.

Mr Bernard Davies, senior lecturer in applied social studies at the University of Warwick, told a conference of social work teachers in Birmingham they should organise themselves to fight the cuts and the philosophy behind them.

Mr Davies told the conference, organised by the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education,

that the ideology of the welfare state was being restructured and the old notion of collective responsibility by the state was disappearing.

He said all those involved in social work had to hold their nerve and embrace the political dimension of their work before the caring tradition was swept away. It was not just a question of defending jobs and courses but also the philosophy of social work.

Professor Olive Stevenson, professor of social policy and social work at Keele University, suggested that lecturers should perhaps teach students more assertiveness training skills to cope with clients during recession.

She told the conference that social work was increasingly turning into a political activity and asked if the traditional skills of social workers would be enough to see them

through the difficult period of the 1980s.

She also suggested that radical thinking would be needed to ensure that some Certificate of Qualification in Social Work did not close following the current of cuts in higher education.

Professor Stevenson attacked the cuts in resources earmarked for social work, but hinted at the hidden benefits in terms of increased effectiveness and a clearer distinction between social services and social work.

Contributions from the conference floor took issue with many ideas suggested by the main speakers, although they reinforced the political theme. A different tack would be to emphasize the need to improve the quality of social work teaching to minimise the effect of diminishing resources.

Pressure mounts to keep all ITBs

The TUC is likely to be asked to bring pressure to bear on the Government for the retention of all Industrial Training Boards, currently under threat of closure, at next month's Congress.

Several unions have put forward preliminary motions which deplore the Government's recent cuts in training and employment services and oppose any dismantling of the ITBs at a time of rapid technological development which requires statutory and not voluntary arrangements for training.

This view is shared by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education which this week responded to the Manpower Services Commission document, *A Framework for the Future*, a sector by sector review of industrial and commercial training.

Theseus and a load of old bull

The exploits of Theseus, the ancient Greek hero who tamed the Minotaur and repulsed the Amazon invasion of Attica, were probably no more than state propaganda invented to boost nationalistic pride, leading classical scholars were told this week.

Professor John Boardman, Lambeth professor in classical art and archaeology at Oxford University, said the deeds of Theseus were "fictitious" and "a load of old bull".

Opening the triennial conference of the Greek and Roman Society at Oxford all this week, certainly a leading society of classical scholars, Professor Boardman said his story across an array of Greek vases, murals, and coins and the Amazons.

In 499 BC Athens sent a fleet to help the Ionians fight the Persians. The story was used to raise the popularity of Theseus, a rising star, to "show how the Athenians taught the barbarians a lesson," Professor Boardman said.

But the crude propaganda of the exercise will no doubt send shivers through all scholars taught to accept the Athenians as bulwarks of the first cradles of democracy.

Professor Boardman, who has written widely on Greek antiquity, the Parthenon, and even iconography, also threw new light on the various origins of the Amazons, a tribe of female warriors.

Classical scholars were the week also set to hear papers on the search for a Middle Class in Ancient Rome, Late Greek and Low Greek, *Double Life*, and the Social Structure of Late Roman Ceremonial life, many others.

Gang of Ten fights for public sector

by Charlotte Barry

A new alliance of college and polytechnic directors, chief education officers and union leaders was unveiled this week in an attempt to counterbalance the political influence of the universities.

The Sheffield group aims to promote the public image and specific interests of the higher education colleges and polytechnics. It is headed by Dr George Tolley, director of Sheffield Polytechnic and includes another dissident director, Sir Norman Lindop of Hatfield Polytechnic.

Other members are chief education officers Mr John Bevan of the Inner London Education Authority, Mr John Tomlinson of Cheshire and Mr Michael Harrison of Sheffield; and national officials Ms Janey Rees and Ms Jean Boucock of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

The rest of the 10-strong group consists of principals Mr Arthur College of Granville College in Sheffield, Dr Roy Helmore of Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology and Mr Derek Lyne of Bedford College of Higher Education.

The formation of this unlikely

alliance comes only a week after the publication of government plans for a national body to control public sector higher education.

In a statement issued today the Sheffield group emphasizes that the colleges and polytechnics provide more than half the country's higher education. They offer much that is different and alternative to university provision but their role is consistently under-rated in public debates on the subjects it claims.

The group says: "The matters to be decided are not in the end those of administrative convenience, nor of cost reduction nor of political advantage, important though these things may be. What is at issue is the competence, skills and potential of the current and future generations of those who must contribute markedly to economic and social well-being and to technological change."

A parliamentary campaign backs the Government's national body proposals has been launched by Tory MPs. They have lodged an early day motion supporting the transfer of public sector higher education from local to central government.

Letters, page 23

NELP chairman saves project

An alternative work research project at North East London Polytechnic was saved from closure this week after a last-minute intervention by the chairman of the polytechnic's governors.

The Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems had been threatened by NELP's refusal to renew staff contracts, apparently without explanation.

Councillor Arthur Edwards has now instructed the polytechnic management to reappoint the staff pending a review by a governing body sub-committee which will report to the governors on October 23.

This move follows a threat of legal action against the polytechnic by the Lucas Aerospace, Combine shop stewards committee, which set up the centre, and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

CAITS receives most of its funds

from three external bodies. War on Want, the Rowntree Trust and the Gulbenkian Foundation. Only the salary of its director Mr Mike George is paid by the polytechnic.

Both the Lucas shop stewards committee and Natfhe were preparing to take out an injunction against the polytechnic stopping it from taking action that went against the governor's decision to carry on housing the centre.

The co-director of CAITS, Mr Mike Cooley, a member of the shop stewards' committee, was seeking an additional "injunction" preventing NELP from "freezing" extra funds he had obtained from the Science Centre in West Berlin.

Matters came to a head last week when Natfhe wrote to Councillor Edwards asking him to intervene in the bitter dispute, which has been brewing since March.

In March the governors of NELP agreed to carry on housing the cen-

Social scientists plan to state their defence case

Social scientists in universities are preparing to mount a vigorous defence of their subjects, one of the areas most severely hit in the round of cuts announced for the next four years by the University Grants Committee.

The Social Research Association, a pressure group set up in 1978 to promote social research, has this week sent letters to all university vice chancellors and principals asking for details about the effects of the cuts.

The SRA has asked for information about three important areas: the likely student reductions in social sciences; how these reductions are to be distributed between subject disciplines; and what are the implications for overall staffing levels.

The SRA letter acknowledges that it is still early days to expect detailed

answers, but the association wants to start monitoring the cuts to test the hope expressed by the UGC that reducing student numbers will mean improved student-staff ratios and research opportunities.

Mr Malcolm Cross, chairman of the SRA and senior research officer based at Aston University, said: "It is clear that social studies have been singled out in many cases by the UGC. We want to monitor the cuts, and start pointing out the dangers if universities proceed."

Preliminary analysis of the UGC letters shows that at least 25 universities have been asked for some reductions in their number of students taking social studies with Surrey, Kent, the City University, Aston, and Stirling all asked for "significant reductions".

London school to offer US degrees

continued from front page

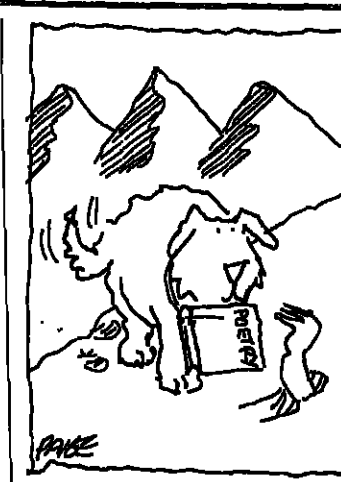
bound to reinforce warnings that overseas students will begin to flock to private colleges which are cheaper and can supply desirable qualifications.

Students taking the new courses will have to pay between £1,200 and £1,300 a year compared to £3,200 in universities and polytechnics. They will have their past experience and previous qualifications turned into credits and receive American qualifications often considered more prestigious in business circles than the British equivalent.

Studies said the new courses were a turning point because for the first time they would allow American-style flexibility.

The centre had taken a great deal of advice on the new programme and saw no reason why the qualifications should not be widely accepted by employers in Britain as well as overseas. There was a feeling the British business studies courses remained somewhat impractical.

The centre plans to provide 150 places, and reports that it has already received 100 applications - "a booming response," as expected, from overseas.



Passion in high places

One of the mysteries of Victorian literature - the identity of Matthew Arnold's "dark lady" - has been solved by Dr Park Honan, a reader in English at Birmingham University.

The beautiful woman with blue eyes and pale cheeks figures in Arnold's *Switzerland* lyrics about a passionate love affair in the Alps. Dr Honan turned up the first clue to her identity 15 years ago.

He unearthed a letter by Matthew Arnold's brother Tom referring to the "cruel invisible Mary Claude." His investigations then took him from

Newcastle to Newhaven and from Connecticut to Wellington, New Zealand.

Miss Claude, it transpired, was a French Protestant, by all accounts beautiful with ash-coloured soft "encheriched" hair, pale blue eyes, rounded cheeks, and a mocking manner.

Dr Honan writes in his book *Matthew Arnold: A Life*, to be published later this month by Weidenfeld and Nicolson: "Arnold's romance was agonizing if not quite mortifying to his ego."

Setback for part-timers' security

by David Jobbins

The chance of better job security soon for part-timers who lecture in more than one college diminished dramatically this week.

Union officials are considering a suggestion that no agreement is possible in time for September 1 and that the question should be referred to the further education joint standing committee - a slimmed down Burnham - for more talks in the autumn.

The move follows extensive talks designed to avoid referring the one remaining issue from last October's

part-time lecturers' agreement to an independent mediator.

The reaction from the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education is bound to be hostile.

Natfhe officials have been becoming increasingly anxious at the lack of progress in resolving the dispute. The union is seeking associate lecturer status for all part-timers lecturing for more than 13 hours a week in more than one college, but has indicated to the employers that they would be prepared to concede some degree of phasing.

After talks at ACAS failed to settle the dispute, an outside mediator was to be called in. But the employers asked if more discussions between officials could take place first to explore possible solutions.

The education authorities have been consulted about attitudes to an outline settlement.

Authorities are being advised that while there is no agreement on mandatory associate lecturer status for part-timers who meet the time qualification, they are not prevented from using their discretionary powers.

Professors attack DES over engineering courses

Britain's engineering professors this week launched a fierce attack on the Department of Education and Science for its refusal to back the general introduction of four-year engineering courses at universities.

Professor Robert Smith, chairman of the Engineering Professors' Conference, said the DES was "simply trying to turn the clock back and is trying to pre-empt the work of the new Engineering Council".

The professors are particularly incensed by the statement made by Secretary of State for Education, Mr Mark Carlisle last week, in which he said numbers of students taking enhanced four-year courses should be limited. "Normal engineering education should continue to take the form of three-year bachelor courses, or sandwich courses," Mr Carlisle added.

The general introduction of four-year courses was originally recommended by the Finiston report and was backed by last October's National Conference on Engineering Education and Training. However, the DES has interpreted the conference report as though it supported the continuation of three-year courses with only limited introduction of enhanced courses. The engineering professors denounced this

as "a false claim".

"The concept of a limited number of four-year courses is believed to be based upon an interpretation of the conference report provided privately to DES officials by the conference chairman, Mr Dick Morris. Representatives of engineering educators did not have the privilege of this particular reading of conference report and therefore have had no opportunity until now to refute it," said Professor Smith.

Originally the engineering professors claimed they would require a further £12m to transform courses into four-year ones but later said by careful manipulation this could be achieved with no extra finance.

"There is a momentum towards establishing four-year courses and all that is needed is a little encouragement from the top but that is certainly not present at the moment," said Professor Charles Turner, secretary of engineering departments now running four-year courses and a further 25 are known to be planning further enhanced courses. "We will expect the new Engineering Council, which was announced last week, and the appointment of Sir Kenneth Corfield as its chairman designate."

Multi-cultural training programme recommended

by Patricia Santinelli

The Government should launch a major programme for teaching those people to train teachers in multi-cultural education, the Commons Home Affairs Committee recommended yesterday.

In its fifth report on racial disadvantage, the committee says that the Department of Education and Science should also ensure that such a programme leads to an uptake in in-service training in multi-cultural education proportionate to its importance.

The committee points out that there have been countless inquiries and surveys which have brought no change, and that the DES is partly responsible for such inertia.

"The time is now ripe for a major initiative. We cannot accept the sort of response which has characterized similar recommendations and we plan to monitor their implementation in particular," the committee says.

It recommends that every initial teacher training course should be examined by its validating body to ensure that it reflects accurately the society in which those who follow the course will be working.

"This is particularly important in the case of postgraduate certificate of education courses which take in half of all new entrants to teaching and at present have only minimal and mainly optional multicultural content," the committee stresses.

The committee also believes that all teachers should have at least some initial specialized training to enable them to perform effectively in a multi-racial classroom. It recommends that teacher training colleges in areas without multi-racial schools should find ways of giving students the opportunity of teaching in such schools elsewhere.

It wants section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 to be changed, to remove the restrictions which limit support to Commonwealth immigrants and to salary costs.

The committee recommends that the DES should set up a unit concerned exclusively with multi-cultural education, while the Government should launch an inquiry into the teaching of English as a second language.

Low publication figures revealed

by Paul Flather

One in four British politics lecturers and more than one in two in polytechnics never publish anything even though they accept publication is vital for career prospects, according to a research paper released last week.

The paper published by the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at Strathclyde University, admits it is not easy to explain this failure to publish although personal preference and promotion plans need to be taken into account.

In addition the paper on political science teaching by Ms Joni Lovenduski of Loughborough University, confirms a bias in recruitment from Oxbridge, in resources against polytechnics, and in career opportunities against women.

The paper calls for a major public relations exercise to promote the significance of teaching politics, and warns lecturers to guard against "complacency and parochialism" as resources are cut.

Overall the average level of publication of two academic articles a year is high, but the figure is dragged down by the high number who publish nothing, with women more unsuccessful than men in actually submitting articles, it says.

Earnings from external work, including publishing, lecturing consul-

tancy and media work varied widely, although more than half asked earned less than £1,000 a year. One in four women earned nothing at all.

One in five of all politics lecturers took their first degree at Oxbridge (20 per cent) with the older civic universities (19 per cent) and London University (12 per cent) next, while four out of five of all polytechnic lecturers have never held any postgraduate or research grant. For universities the figure is two out of five.

The paper shows that politics accounted for just 1.7 per cent of all university teaching (in 1977) compared to economics (3.8 per cent), sociology (3.6 per cent) and physics (6.2 per cent), and its share actually declined after the upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s.

One danger is that politics as a subject is under-represented in official government statistics, often classified under the mixed-subjects heading. This and the fact that it is a non-vocational subject with few links to government unlike America leads Ms Lovenduski to conclude that a campaign to promote politics is much needed.

The Profession of Political Science in Britain, £1.50 from the Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1QN.

UGC explains its criteria for cuts

by Ngaio Crequer

Academics were this week studying the evidence given by the University Grants Committee, now published, to MPs which reveals for the first time the criteria used to make the cuts.

Dr Edward Parkes, chairman of the UGC told the Commons select committee on education that they had tried to decide what resources could be made available in each of the main subject areas, trying to get the best academic economic advantage out of the system.

They had depended for this on subject committees, the universities' own description of their activities, the research councils, and others. Having looked at subject provision as a whole, they had then looked at institutions to see what balance of subjects they had been left with.

They had fed in things such as part-time educational provision, and unique factors at a very small number of universities.

Dr Parkes said that he wanted to make it particularly clear to those institutions which suffered severe cuts: "There is absolutely no value judgment about the institution in what we have done. Some of these institutions, I know, have plans for development which will be treated on exactly the same basis as those of any other institutions and some of those, indeed, I would expect us to fund and help."

Earlier he said that objective criteria would include information on the likely numbers of young people coming forward from schools, and knowledge of the available physical

staffing capacity of universities. The UGC knew the types of courses given and their attractiveness to students.

He said that A levels were a measure of the attractiveness of courses. "But that said, you must not use them as raw data and, say, tick off the courses that attract people with high A levels and delete the ones that do not."

Neither must you adopt it as a criterion for universities. "In the allegation that when judging research quality, the committee had put greater weight on research council grants than on general industrial grants. He said that, generally speaking, money from research councils did not cover overheads and therefore needed a matching grant from outside to make it viable, whereas much external support carried an economic overhead."

In answer to questions, Dr Parkes said the UGC had compared not only the UGC's good and bad courses, but good and better. "The retention of practically every course for financial reasons we have had to cut."

Dr Parkes said that the committee did not adopt any regional criteria, except in the cases of Glasgow and Strathclyde, which had abnormal local recruitment, and where there was the teaching of Welsh.

When he was asked if the committee considered the employability of graduates, Dr Parkes said that the only regular information on this was statistics on the first destination of graduates.

Open door in danger of slamming shut

Academics at the Open University fear their policy of education for all is threatened - despite a record number of applications.

More than 46,000 prospective students - 3000 more than last year - have applied to start degree courses in January and 24,600 of them will be accepted.

But the OU is nevertheless disturbed by new evidence that last year's 46 per cent fee increase turned even more applicants away. The higher fees are also causing increased financial hardship for current students.

In spite of a sharp rise in the number of inquiries from prospective

students, the proportion going ahead to apply has dropped from two thirds to a third in the last four years. The number who decline the offer of a place has increased from a quarter to a third, and the regional pattern mirrors the level of unemployment in those areas.

The number of local education authorities outside Scotland paying summer school fees (now £75) has plummeted from a third to a quarter. The proportion of i.e.s. offering no help at all with both summer school and tuition fees of £98 has leapt from 4 per cent to an expected 35 cent this year.

Students choosing to pay by instal-



Professor grasps the thistle

Professor Victor Otake strolls round Edinburgh University in the only weather appropriate to the Scottish Universities' Summer School.

Professor Otake, who teaches English and American literature at the Tokyo College of Economics, has just published his Japanese translation of Hugh MacDiarmid's major Scots poem *A Drunk Man Looks At The Thistle*.

"The professor began his work on the poem at an Edinburgh summer school five years ago when he was preparing for a Scottish literature tutorial by paraphrasing the Scots into English. 'Before I knew, I was turning it into Japanese poetry.'"

He was assisted through the intricacies of Scots by Dr Cairns Craig of Edinburgh University's English department, and director of the Scottish Universities' Summer School, who has written the book's foreword.

Lecturers' union wants £200m increase in rate support grant

by Patricia Santinelli

A call on the Government to immediately increase the rate support grant by £200m so that local authorities can help young people has come from a lecturers' union.

Mr Mick Farley, assistant secretary (further education) of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education said local authorities could then employ sufficient careers staff, and restore adult, youth service and discretionary awards to help both the young unemployed and the increased post school age group.

He said: "If such steps are not taken then the insanity and tragedy of it will undoubtedly be measured in more lost jobs, more youth crime and vandalism, in further lurches to extremism and in lost chances for the country as a whole."

Local authorities which had already faced major cuts in their budgets were now confronted by the latest target of reducing expenditure by nearly 6 per cent, accompanied by a threat to withdraw about £450m in rate support if they did not, he said. This was at a time when increasing

youth unemployment and an unprecedented demand for further education was putting more pressure than ever on the education authorities.

If they were to implement cuts on the scale required, Bedfordshire for example would have to cut £900,000 from its education budget over the next six months, Manchester around £4m and Norfolk some £10m - the latter intends to cut £4m including £1.5m from its education service.

The extra £60m announced last week was nothing more than window dressing, since it was not to be provided until 1982/83, instead of immediately when it was vitally needed.

The position of young people hoping for training or employment was even worse, considering the sharp drop of 10 per cent in apprenticeship recruitment and the estimated 60 per cent of under 18-year-olds expected to be seeking work by 1983 without being able to find it.

It was urgent that the Youth Opportunities Programme should not just be expanded to provide more places but must be radically redesigned if it was not to collapse.

Unions clash on membership figures

Two rival lecturers' trade unions have become embroiled in a "bitter squabble over membership figures" as they await a ministerial decision on adding one of them to the Bargain further education committee.

The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, with 12 of the 16 places on the committee, has written to Education Secretary Mr Mark Carls claiming that they have found "glaring inconsistencies" in the membership return lodged with the certification officer by the non-TUC Association of Polytechnic Teachers.

Mr Carls is considering whether to confirm his earlier decision to give an extra seat on the committee to APT in the face of opposition not only from Nafthe but from the last authority employers.

APT has told the certification officer it has 3,232 members in the UK including Northern Ireland, with a subscription income of £30,28. "When subscriptions are divided by £15, APT's annual subscription, the number of paid-up members works out at 2,155 - roughly two thirds of the number claimed by APT," Mr Janey Rees, Nafthe's education secretary, said.

"What's happened to the other 1,000 members?"

Nafthe said they had based their calculations on a subscription of £15 - the figure typed on a 1980 application form in their possession.

But APT said their subscription went up from £12 to £15 a year on January 1 this year. If this was used as the base of the calculation, all our members were fully paid up, there were no part-timers paying less than the full subscription, no underpayment, all members had joined at the same time, and local associations subscribed nothing for their expenses this would correspond to 'real members' - the union's local secretary, Dr Tony Pointon, said.

Everybody in trades unions knows that there is never a complete accord between income and the number of members multiplied by subscriptions."

APT has 650 members who are either retired, part-time or in some other way not paying the full amount.

The explanation was greeted with scepticism by Nafthe officials. Mr Rees said: "Nafthe's membership in the polytechnics is 11,726 and they have all paid their subscriptions."

"Our figures include no part-timers unless they have paid the full subscription," negotiating secretary Mr Derek Weitzell added. "Neither does it include retired members or people in Northern Ireland."

New course on alcoholic counselling

England's first course in alcohol counselling is to be launched at Kent University next year. The course, which is to be backed by the Department of Health and Social Security, will be designed for all professional staff in the health service and for those working for voluntary agencies.

The part-time, post-qualification course will last a year and will allow students to take equal mix of academic and practical periods for days a week with short and 12-week block study. Between 10 and 12 students will take part each year and will be instructed in basic skills needed in working with problem drinkers and their families and to provide support for other community workers dealing with this area.

A major reason for establishing the course has been the increasing problems faced by social workers, doctors and probation officers who have to deal with child abuse, drug and crime which can all be caused by excess drinking.

North American news

Admin 'muddlers' take US lessons

from Clive Cookson

NEW YORK Running a university has always been a tougher, more combative job in the United States than in the United Kingdom.

Even in the booming 1960s, American university administrators were operating in a political and economic jungle, full of dangers and uncertainties as well as great opportunities; their British counterparts, by contrast, could rely on a gentlemanly system of government support to feed them funds and students at a predictable rate for years ahead.

Recently, of course, the predictability of the British system has been breaking down, and financial planning and resource allocation have simultaneously become far more difficult and more important.

The immediate future looks still more uncertain. Some university staff in the UK are therefore, looking across the Atlantic for guidance.

Last week a party of 17 university administrators from Britain found out at first hand how higher education officials in the United States cope with budget cuts and political pressures, at an Anglo-American conference on university resource allocation. The meeting, in New York, was funded mainly by the Exxon Education Foundation.

After two days of detailed discussion, however, many participants felt that the structural differences between the two systems of higher education were so great that the US model was still of very limited use to British university administrators. At the same time, all agreed that they had learned valuable lessons from the conference - the first comparative Anglo-American exercise of its kind.

Mr William Pickens, director of fiscal analysis at the California Post-secondary Education Commission, observed after the meeting that he did see a broad similarity in the apparent inability of both British and American universities to plan for severe retrenchment.

"The difference is that we insist on approaching everything in an optimistic spirit, whether or not optimism is justified, while you just think you can muddle through."

Not everyone would have made that point in exactly those terms, but it soon became clear that no individual university or system of higher education in either country had ever prepared properly to meet an im-



Mr Caston: outlined problem

pending financial or enrolment crisis. After hearing from the British contingent about the implications of the UGC letter of July 1, cutting the income of some universities by up to 30 per cent over three years, American participants urged them to avoid the US experience of "waiting until the blood was on the floor" before developing retrenchment policies.

But the Britons knew that it was already too late to take that advice.

The greatest practical problem for British and American universities in facing up to severe budget cuts is how to lay off senior academics, who are protected by the tradition and the legal armour of tenure.

In more abstract terms, the challenge is to protect excellence and cut out the less good - an aim that everyone at the conference seemed to agree was better than "spreading the misery equally."

Mr Geoffrey Caston, secretary-general of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, outlined the size of the academic redundancy problem that now faces Britain. The number of faculty positions must be cut by between 10 and 15 per cent over a two-year period in which natural wastage would produce only a 2 per cent reduction. So compulsory lay-offs were inevitable.

But academics threatened with dismissal would sue, and, if the courts upheld their contracts of employment, universities would face huge

costs for compensation and damages. Mr Caston estimated that two-thirds of the money the Government saved through the university cuts would be consumed by redundancy payments, though there was no precedent to act as a guide.

In America's more litigious atmosphere, any attempt to "terminate" faculty members is guaranteed to land a university in court. Indeed Mr Edwin Smith, Assistant Vice-President of West Virginia University, said that future academic retrenchment plans could end up being directed by federal courts, leaving universities with little say in what happened.

But, he said, there had not been enough major institutions in sufficiently serious trouble to act as a reliable precedent in the United States, either.

On the issue of excellence versus equality, the British felt on stronger ground. "The decisions taken by the UGC in their July 1 letter were courageous because they have answered the question by coming down heavily on the side of excellence," said Mr Roy Butler, secretary to the faculties at the University of Oxford, and many of his British colleagues voiced similar sentiments.

Nothing resembling the UGC exists in the United States. Almost every state has a coordinating commission or board to oversee its public higher education. But - for all their diversity - these American bodies lack two essential features of the UGC.

Its closed secretive nature; and the fact that its members do not serve as representatives of any specific institutions or outside interest groups.

As the Americans made clear, their tradition of open government would make it impossible for any state board to hold all meetings and make all decisions in private. But Mr Michael Shattuck, academic registrar of Warwick University and Chairman of the Conference of University administrators group on resource allocation, said:

"I find it hard to believe that a representative committee - representing specific interests or institutions - could have produced a result that went for excellence rather than equally distributed misery," he said of the "highly unequal" distribution of the latest cuts.

Members of the public bodies that allocate resources to colleges and

universities in the United States do represent specific interests - whether individual institutions or, quite frequently, geographical areas within the state - and, of course, they fight hard to protect their own constituency.

Members also often feel intense political pressure on their decision-making. The result is, indeed, that board or commission cannot so easily recommend what its members privately believe to be the best allocation of resources.

One or two of the Americans were astonished by what they saw as the failure of British universities to fight a full-scale political battle to extract more money from the Government. "If I were you I wouldn't accept the given standards of your society," said Mr Arnold Goren, vice-chancellor of New York University. "I certainly would not be as gentlemanly about your situation as you seem to be."

Some of the British tried hard to convince Mr Goren that they were doing their best to fight the cuts but that his American idea of "intense political activity" with a huge public lobbying campaign, would not work well in a closed system where the real decisions are taken by ministers and civil servants behind closed doors.

Mr Caston - the sharpest British participant - even said the decision-making process in his country had "totalitarian" characteristics, though he withdrew that word when challenged by a more cautious colleague.

Later he used "authoritarian" instead to compare it to the American system and its diverse political pressure points.

This successful conference was initiated and organized on the British side by Mr Michael Shattuck, academic registrar of Warwick University and Chairman of the Conference of University administrators group on resource allocation.

The commission is headed by Mr Robert Fleming, a former president of Michigan University, who has no doubts about the value of this latest body.

"This is not a study commission," he said. "Our goal is not to publish a 5 lb report, file it on a bookshelf and go out of business. We want our recommendations put to work."

ACE deals bid for private cash

Another name has been added to the lengthy list of organizations out to solve the problems in American higher education.

The American Council on Education has just launched the higher education issues group which comprises 43 educators, government officials, and business and trade union leaders.

Its initial agenda has a familiar ring to it - not surprisingly, as it has been drawn up by representatives of eight other national higher education associations.

Its first meeting - it expects to have several over the next year - is to consider how the academic community can help the flagging economy and industrial productivity; how to help institutions invest in new equipment and facilities; and what adjustments will have to be made in the light of the Reagan Administration's emphasis on initiatives from the private sector.

The programme is also concerned with improving teaching quality, and the links between public and private institutions, and reforming the structure of higher education.

The president of ACE, Mr Jack Peltason, says the council will rely on members' "pragmatism, goodwill, persuasiveness and networks of professional contacts" to ensure their recommendations win widespread acceptance.

The commission is headed by Mr Robert Fleming, a former president of Michigan University, who has no doubts about the value of this latest body.

"This is not a study commission," he said. "Our goal is not to publish a 5 lb report, file it on a bookshelf and go out of business. We want our recommendations put to work."

The Times Higher Education Supplement
Important news for New Subscribers in the United States of America and Canada

New subscribers to The Times Higher Education Supplement in the U.S. and Canada can now take advantage of our special introductory rate of \$60* for a year's issues. Simply complete the coupon below and our computerized subscription service will process your order at once.

***Payment must be made in US dollars only.**

Please send me The Times Higher Education Supplement for one year. I enclose my cheque for \$60, made payable to Times Newspapers Ltd.

Please print

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Mail this coupon with your cheque to Times Newspapers Limited Supplements Subscription Manager, Oakfield House, 35 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH, England.

HA1

Other overseas subscribers should write for information to the address above.

Overseas news

Unlucky 13 rectors go in French purge

from Guy Neave

PARIS In a major purge of the regional administrators of France's education system, 13 of the country's 26 rectors have been removed. The purge, implemented by M. Alain Savary, the minister of education, was long expected. But it has turned out to be more radical than most had reckoned. Originally, only some 10 rectors were thought to be on the firing line.

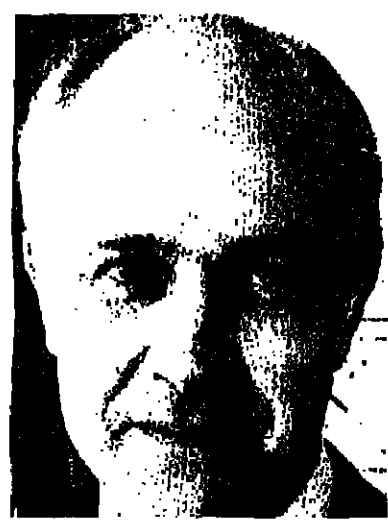
The rectors, French education's counterpart to the prefect in the departments, act as the official representatives of the Ministry of National Education within France's 26 educational regions.

The decision, confirmed at a cabinet meeting on July 29, is one of the most significant steps taken in recent years.

Among the rectors to have received their marching orders are those of Versailles, Amiens, Aix-Marseille, Limoges, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Rennes, Nantes, Nice, Lille, Tours, Orleans and Bordeaux. The vice-chancellor of the Paris region, equivalent to a deputy education officer, has also been ousted.

Despite insistent pressure for the abolition of the office of rector, no mention has been made at official level of taking this dramatic step — one for which the Syndicat Général de l'Education Nationale, a teachers' union close to the non-communist left and in particular to the Confédération Française Du Travail Démocratique, has been enthusiastic.

Even so, there is good reason to think that the office of rector is less than secure. The proposals for decentralizing France's administration were outlined last week in the National Assembly by M. Gaston Defferre, the minister of the interior. They look forward to a considerable shift in power away from Paris and



Alain Savary: his long-awaited purge is more radical than expected.

towards the regions. Particularly significant are the changes envisaged in the prefect's role, which will be considerably diminished, with a corresponding loss of executive powers. Similarly, it is highly likely that the role of the rector will undergo drastic changes — if not in the near future, then over the next two years.

In the past, however, there have been similar purges. Under the ministry of Joseph Fontanet (1972-74), some rectors were dismissed, although not as many as now.

One explanation for the brutal weeding out is that the teachers and lecturers newly elected to the National Assembly form an influential group on the left. Another factor, which makes the liquidation of these unfortunates seem somewhat gratuitous, is the fact that the last two education ministers have been technical appointments — and thus less inclined to disturb existing posts.

Decision to increase tertiary fees 'is short-sighted'

from Geoff Maslen

MELBOURNE Universities and colleges across Australia have condemned the federal government over its decision to reintroduce tertiary fees for students undertaking second and higher degrees. The government has announced that, from 1982, it will cost full-time students who enrol for a second degree \$1,000 (£600) a year for further study.

The decision, according to Professor Brian Wilson, vice-chancellor of Queensland University, was symptomatic of a short-sighted view of education which would seriously affect Australia's social and economic future. Professor Wilson said the Government might eventually save between \$8m and \$20m a year through the introduction of postgraduate fees — a relatively minor saving compared with the annual budget of \$1,600m for the university and college sector.

"At best, this move will provide a powerful disincentive for talented people to undertake a high-level training. At worst, it will mean Australia will become still more reliant on other countries for advanced technology, research and development. And it will mean some of our best people will be lost to Australia as they develop their skills in countries which have a more enlightened approach to education", Professor Wilson said.

The Federation of Australian University Staff Associations said it was appalled at the government's decision. Dr Peter Darvall, president of the federation, has called on universities to refuse to collect the fees. "The administrative costs will swallow up much of the total fee income. For this reason and because of the value of postgraduate students to the uni-

versity enterprise, we believe that the universities should forego this paltry contribution to their overall funding," he said.

The Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee has also come out with a strong statement opposing tertiary fees and calling on the government to reverse the decision. The AVCC would pose to postgraduate students, leading to further erosion of the research activities of universities.

The committee said fees would discourage the necessary upgrading of qualifications and the retraining of people whose original qualifications had become less relevant. Fees would also distort the pattern of study within universities and colleges by inducing students to undertake diploma studies which were exempt from fees, rather than course work masters' degrees.

Meanwhile, the Australian government has announced that it will not provide money for the establishment of a university in the Northern Territory at least not for the next three years, and probably not for the rest of this decade.

This month, the government released a special report by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission on a proposal by the Northern Territory government for a university to be set up in Darwin. Recommendations put forward by the commission and adopted by the government were that it would be years before the populations of the Darwin region reached the point at which the operation of a university there would become viable.

The Northern Territory government reacted angrily. Mr Paul Everingham, chief minister of the Territory, said he had no intention of dropping the proposal for a university, and would continue to employ people to go on with its planning.

Universities' deficit wiped out

from John Walshe

DUBLIN The Republic's new coalition government has given urgently needed financial help to the universities and to improve student grants. This will ease what Dr Thomas Murphy, president of University College, Dublin (UCD), has called the colleges' "hopeless" financial position.

The five university colleges had faced a combined deficit of around IR£9m (£7.2m) by the end of the year on top of an accumulated deficit of IR£1.7m.

In spite of the economic problems the coalition inherited, the new Education Minister, Mr John Boland, was able to obtain Cabinet agreement to wipe out most of the threatened deficits.

However, the universities still face a difficult time. In UCD alone, about 50 academic and other posts will

remain unfilled for the present and any further vacancies will be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny before they are filled; if they are filled at all.

For students, the most unwelcome news was a 30 per cent rise in tuition fees which will mean an extra IR£100 to IR£150 for most undergraduates. A haircut Budget will add to their woes. A 25 per cent rise in electricity charges hits those in flats; a similar increase in transport costs will also hit hard, especially as there is very little on-campus accommodation. So too will a 5 per cent increase on VAT for most items including textbooks. And that's apart from increases on petrol, beer and tobacco. The new government states that the extra revenue from taxes is needed because of the "economic mess" it inherited.

About a third of university stu-

dents will be cushioned, however, against the budget and fee rises. This follows improvement in the levels of direct financial support for students, as pledged in pre-election programmes.

The maximum value of maintenance grants is being raised from IR£600 to IR£1,000 (apart from fees which are met in full for those who qualify for aid). The eligibility limit on parents' income for qualifying aid have also been raised very substantially.

The change has been welcomed by most, but it is difficult to estimate how many extra students will benefit and how much they will gain from the extension. This is partly because there is an academic criterion as well; applicants must have honours in their Leaving Certificate — they normally need six for college entry.

Sorting out a mountain of wisdom

from Uli Schmetzer

ROME Italy's education ministry has become a huge warehouse of academic paraphernalia, ranging from theses and dissertations to graphical contributions. And each day tons of fresh material are pouring through the gates.

It is all part of a massive examination to reclassify the country's academic staff into three main categories — professors, assistant professors and researchers.

In the running for these staff jobs are 42,000 academics and each of them supplies an average 45 to 65 pounds of material.

The process of sifting through these mountains of academic wisdom is slow and arduous, though Signor Domenico Fazio, the general director of the ministry, believes most of the posts will be allocated at the end of the year by the 389 boards of examiners which select the successful applicants.

The "public" examinations to reclassify staff were part of the academic staff reform parcel passed by the Italian parliament last year.

The selection process has been most rapid in the highest category. This month, education authorities said that 9,000 of the 15,000 senior professorial posts envisaged had already been allotted. The rest were to be filled by the end of the year.

Considerably slower has been the "examination" of second echelon academic staff for the 15,000 posts of associate professors, the so-called *Assistenti*. There are 20,000 applicants, of whom 6,000 will be taken from the ranks of recent graduates.

So far the examiners have allocated 2,700 of the 12,000 available posts in the new category of researchers, teachers who will also give tutorials. The applicants are mainly taken from the ranks of scholarship holders, contract teachers, technicians and laboratory assistants who previously led a precarious existence on the campus fringes, always at the mercy of the whims of their deans as contractors and scholarships had to be annually renewed.

There are 14,459 applicants for the posts as researchers, of which 4,000 will be allocated to recent graduates. While the examiners scrutinized their attached materials, Italy's 168 colleges which will decide the use of new scientific research funds.

The 168 — divided into 14 regional committees, each comprising 12 members — are to be given the task of allocating the £20m earmarked for special research by the Italian government.

Another £40m voted by parliament for scientific research will be allocated to various universities for projects already in existence.

Jobs problems of overseas students

from Martin Roth

TOKYO Many South-east Asian students who study at Japanese universities face problems getting jobs when they return home, Japanese researchers have concluded.

Professor Kaichi Maekawa and Assistant Professor Banri Asanuma of Kyoto University spent a month touring the five members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines — and interviewed many people there who had graduated from Japanese universities.

Their findings have been compiled into a report, *Effectiveness and Problems of Studies in Japan by ASEAN Students*.

In Indonesia, according to the report, the best-paid and most prestigious jobs were in the public sector, particularly with the central government in Jakarta. But opportunities for these jobs were scarce, and the competition was fierce. Having a good connexion within the government was said to be important.

Indonesians studying in Japan for several years returned home to find that their contracts and connexions had weakened. In addition, their Japanese university degree was not recognized to the extent of those from Western countries, the report added.

Similar problems existed in Singapore and Malaysia, two former British colonies. In both countries, bachelors' degrees from Japan were not rated as highly as those from British or other Western universities. Graduates of Japanese universities thus found themselves at a disadvantage when looking for jobs.

The report said that the only Japanese degrees accorded a high status in Malaysia were those in shipbuilding from Tokyo University, in electronics from Kyoto University, and in fisheries from Tokyo University of Fisheries or from Kagoshima University.

Czechs to try sit-in leader

Poland's new independent student union, NZS has appealed to students abroad to rally to the defence of their Czechoslovak colleague Miss Lenka Cvrckova, who was due to go on trial today.

Miss Cvrckova who reads philosophy at the Charles University, Prague, was in Poland last winter when the student sit-in strike began in Lodz, demanding legal recognition of the NZS. She took an active part in organizing the sit-in, and was one of the editors of the students' strike bulletin.

On February 19, while the sit-in was still in progress, she was arrested and deported to Czechoslovakia, where she was detained, first in Ostrava and later in Prague's Ruzyně Prison.

Miss Cvrckova is charged under two articles of the Czechoslovak penal code. The first, Article 98,

In Thailand, however, the two researchers found that graduates from Japan were generally treated fairly to those from other countries, many were now said to be working in prestigious government and university teaching jobs.

In the Philippines, too, Japanese degrees were said to be generally acceptable, though the report said that many of the Filipino graduates went on to do postgraduate studies elsewhere, after study in Japan.

There are no statistics on many ASEAN country students who graduated from Japanese universities, although the number is said to be increasing rapidly every year.

In 1954, the Japanese government launched a scholarship scheme for overseas students, and since then awarded 1,369 of these to students from ASEAN countries. Now many thousands more have obtained their own resources.

Last year, 60 per cent of the foreign students enrolled at Japanese universities were said to be from ASEAN countries.

Many of them find Japan a difficult country in which to live. It is overwhelmingly expensive compared to their home countries, and the Japanese generally do not accept them the same politeness and respect they often show to Westerners.

And while Western students make a lot of money in Japan, teaching English part-time, or as models, there is no similar demand for Asians, who sometimes have to take low-paid jobs as dishwashers or waiters to pay their way through university.

Consequently, there is a common impression in Japan that most of the students return home bitter and resentful at discriminatory treatment from the Japanese.

However, the report said that the vast most of the graduates returned home with good memories of Japan, and valued highly their experiences in the country.

Few ministers can ever have looked as bored by their own presentation as did Mr Carlisle last week when he introduced his Green Paper on the future of public sector higher education. The education secretary was flummoxed by detailed questions and seemed surprised that anyone should find his discussion document interesting, let alone contentious.

But despite the low-key approach deliberately fostered by the Department of Education and Science, the Green Paper is unquestionably the most momentous change in British higher education for 15 years. It signals the end of the binary policy initiated in 1965 by Mr Anthony Crosland and promises an uncertain future for the polytechnics and major colleges presently under local government.

Although ostensibly offering a choice of futures for public sector higher education, the Green Paper is sprinkled with clues indicating the government's preference for what it calls Model B — the scheme to end local government control.

The 30 polytechnics and some 60 other colleges, including all those which provide teacher training, will be transferred to central government and funded through a body similar to the University Grants Committee. Eventually, according to Mr Richard Bird, the DES deputy secretary, the new body and the UGC could be brought together, either under a single umbrella committee or through collaborative machinery of some other kind.

Reform along these lines would by any standards represent a massive shift of power to central government and to the Department of Education and Science. But officials in the DES have become convinced that centralization of control is essential if the higher education system is to survive the cuts of the next few years in any coherent shape.

At face value Model B appears to be a bold and even elegant solution to the complicated problems of higher education planning. But it is one that entails breaking not only with the Crosland policy under which the polytechnics were created but also with a long tradition of partnership between local education authorities and the DES. What persuaded the government to take so radical a step?

Mr Carlisle's intention to break with the local authorities became firm public knowledge only six months ago when a Cabinet paper, setting out what is now called model B, was leaked in the press. That document argued that the need to establish central control had become urgent because of the contraction of the public sector, and the fact that the higher education system, however, merely the final blow to a relationship which had been deteriorating for years. In the 1970s the spread of corporate management within local authorities had begun to weaken the political authority of education committees, a process which culminated with the disbandment of the powerful Association of Education Committees under its charismatic secretary, Lord Alexander.

In place of the independent AEC, which had united education authorities of all political complexions, the two major local authority associations created the Council of Local Education Authorities. Unlike its predecessor, CLEA was tightly muzzled by its parent associations. It was never allowed to appoint a significant leader of its own and it was managed by the education secretaries of the parent associations who were, in turn, subordinate to their separate policy committees.

Before the spread of corporate management in local government education committees had been the dominant factor in local authority policies. Their loss of power had a corresponding impact on the DES, which began to feel itself less able to deliver its policies at a local level. Education's diminished power locally began to have an impact on Cabinet battles, too. During the final period of the Labour Government, Mrs Shirley Williams lost a crucial contest with the Department of Employment over the department's youth unemployment and the 16-19 age group.

Mrs Williams's defeat was a watershed in the fortunes of the two departments. As youth unemployment continued to increase under the Conservative Government, more funds were pumped into the Department of Education while the Department of Employment and Science suffered a series of painful cuts.

Many officials in the DES believe strongly that provision for the 16-19 age group, one of the few expanding areas of government, should rightfully have been a DES responsibility. They ascribe Mrs Williams's defeat to the inability of her department to cut through the buffer of local government.

While the Department of Employment was able to channel its funds directly into the dynamic new Manpower Services Commission, DES could never guarantee that its policies would be adhered to by local authorities after they received their block grant from central government. The local authorities vigorously resisted attempts to earmark funds for specific programmes or services.

There can be little doubt that this unhappy experience over the 16-19s weakened the department's commitment to a partnership with local government. As if to drive the point home, publication of the Green Paper last week coincided with the government's £500m youth training package — the lion's share of which is to go to the Department of Employment.

The DES's general disenchantment with local government was compounded, in the case of higher education, by an inability to make progress towards a reform of the pooling system under which public sector higher education was funded.

Public body politic



Radical proposals to end local government control of polytechnics and colleges were published last week by the Department of Education and Science. In the first of two articles on the Green Paper, PETER DAVID traces the events which led to the collapse of a traditional partnership between local education authorities and the DES. Next week he assesses the impact of 'nationalization'.

partments. As youth unemployment continued to increase under the Conservative Government, more funds were pumped into the Department of Education while the Department of Employment and Science suffered a series of painful cuts.

Many officials in the DES believe strongly that provision for the 16-19 age group, one of the few expanding areas of government, should rightfully have been a DES responsibility. They ascribe Mrs Williams's defeat to the inability of her department to cut through the buffer of local government.

While the Department of Employment was able to channel its funds directly into the dynamic new Manpower Services Commission, DES could never guarantee that its policies would be adhered to by local authorities after they received their block grant from central government. The local authorities vigorously resisted attempts to earmark funds for specific programmes or services.

There can be little doubt that this unhappy experience over the 16-19s weakened the department's commitment to a partnership with local government. As if to drive the point home, publication of the Green Paper last week coincided with the government's £500m youth training package — the lion's share of which is to go to the Department of Employment.

The DES's general disenchantment with local government was compounded, in the case of higher education, by an inability to make progress towards a reform of the pooling system under which public sector higher education was funded.

In the mid-1970s both the DES and the local authorities were unhappy with the existing pooling arrangements. On the local authority side, the system had caused strains between authorities which maintained institutions, and therefore drew money from the national pool, and those which had no colleges of their own but were nevertheless obliged to contribute.

The local authorities were also anxious about the absence of effective regional coordination, particularly in teacher training. In 1975 CLEA proposed setting up a system of further education advisory councils to coordinate national provision.

No reforms were ever implemented, however. The 1970s were a turbulent period for local government and the DES saw little advantage in introducing major changes until the Layfield inquiry on local government finance had reported.

When it did at last report, the Layfield committee complained about the separation in local government finance between responsibility for raising money and responsibility for spending it. The pooling system was a clear example of the problem, and in 1976 Mr Fred Mulley, then education secretary, decided to undertake a comprehensive review of public sector higher education.

In the event, the "comprehensive inquiry" which began work under Mr Gordon Oakes early in 1977 was merely to add to the frustrations of the DES. The department soon found itself having to hold the ring while the local authorities and the polytechnics launched into a pitched battle over higher education in the public sector.

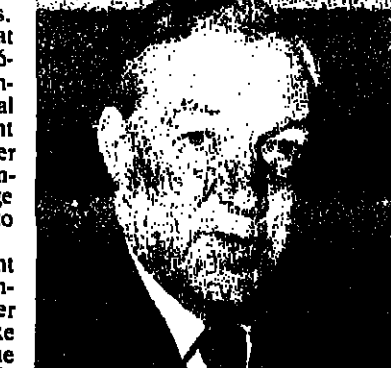
In its terms of reference the Oakes committee, made the "underlying assumption" that local government would remain in charge of higher education outside the universities.

But there were clearly those in the government as well as in the polytechnics who would have preferred to see an end to local government control.

Early in its report the Oakes committee included a paragraph which now looks almost prophetic. It said: "We accepted that local education authorities will be major providers of higher education, and this has ruled out of consideration the wholesale transfer of institutions to other management."

"We recognized, however, that some would advocate measures of this sort and failure on our part to recommend changes which command substantial public support could pave the way for such development."

Local government members of the Oakes committee were only too well aware of the threat of a central takeover, but instead of inspiring them to



Carlisle: low-key

reach a satisfactory compromise, the danger of losing control of the polytechnics merely increased their determination to keep firm possession of all the financial levers.

What this meant was that CLEA's representatives on the Oakes committee were constantly having to prevent their parent associations from conceding too much to central government or to the colleges.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities, for example, tried to prevent the committee from recommending the creation of a national body, proposing instead a financial recoupment system under which no central planning would be possible at all.

When it finally accepted that there was an overwhelming consensus in favour of a national body, the AMA strove to secure a local government majority. At the very end of the negotiations, the AMA's secretary tried unsuccessfully to overrule his members on the Oakes committee and veto the report on the grounds that it would pave the way to an earmarked grant for polytechnics and colleges — always anathema to local authority treasurers.

As a result of these machinations, the Oakes report published in the spring of 1978 was only weakly supported by the groups represented on the committee. The local authorities had only reluctantly agreed to the creation of a national body which they would not tightly control. And the polytechnic directors were more than ever determined to break free from what they saw as a paralyzing municipal bureaucracy.

The Oakes report looked like a compromise, too. It would set up a national body, but only an advisory one. Local authority members would not form a majority but could exercise a veto. The pooling system would continue, but authorities

maintaining colleges would be expected to make a local contribution as an incentive to efficiency.

The Labour Government nevertheless felt that Oakes was the best package available and that by creating a national body, even one as finely balanced as that recommended in the report, it would be possible to introduce a new element of national planning and control. Plans for legislation went creaking forward but were abruptly halted after the Conservative election victory in 1979.

At the DES the incoming Tory ministers lost no time in declaring that the Oakes plan was to be put on ice. Dr Rhodes Boyson told Parliament that the Oakes proposals were too bureaucratic and that the entire question of polytechnic and college funding was to be reviewed.

The real reasons for the Conservative decision to halt Oakes have

never been entirely clear, however. One factor was the unpopularity of quangos in the early days of Mrs Thatcher's administration. Another was the fact that the recommendations bore the name of a Labour minister. It is possible that some voices within the DES were already arguing the case for nationalization. But the evidence suggests that the decision was primarily a political one and that it left the department with a dangerous policy vacuum.

To fill the policy vacuum the DES took five steps. At an immediate tactical level it did two things. First it "capped" the pool so that local authorities could only exceed a predetermined level of spending, on higher education by funding the surplus from local rates. Then it introduced a tough new circular on course approvals effectively freezing new developments.

A further three measures were introduced with longer range objectives. One was the establishment of a working group to overcome the important technical problems arising from the capping of the pool. A second was to ask the House of Commons select committee to look at higher education funding as one of its first inquiries. A third was to set up a small number of "transitory" committees to coordinate planning between CLEA and the UGC.

It is impossible to know the exact point at which the DES took a private sixth step and resolved to take the polytechnics and colleges out of local government altogether. But at least four of the first five steps helped to increase the hand of the centralists within the department.

The prime aim of capping the pool and freezing course approvals was to cut spending in line with the Government's general economic strategy. But another consequence was to throw the public sector institutions into greater disarray and make the

need for some sort of reorganization even more urgent.

A peculiarity of the pooling system prevented cuts from being distributed to local authorities on anything other than an arbitrary basis. The DES working group under assistant secretary Mr Stephen Jones was asked to devise a way of avoiding the random and often unfair cuts experienced by colleges in the first year of the capped pool.

Aided by the local authorities, the Stephen Jones group inched towards a new method of distributing the cuts, based on a system of national average costs of students in public sector institutions. But although the new system promised to be more equitable than the random cuts which preceded it, it was based on a mathematical formula administered by the DES: the role of the 90 local education authorities ostensibly planning and funding higher education came to look increasingly superfluous.

Another of the measures taken by the DES — establishment of the "transitory" committees of national UGC — also helped to underline the weak position of local government in planning higher education.

The department's original proposal to set up six transitory committees investigating special planning difficulties had to be whittled down to three after the local authority associations said that they could not provide enough officers to man all the groups. In fact, the local authority associations employed only a single officer specializing in higher education. CLEA could muster fewer than 10 of its own education officials to cover the whole of education policy.

In a major effort to establish its credibility in higher education CLEA did establish a higher education group — a subcommittee of members which a special interest in polytechnics and colleges. But it was a move which soured relations with the DES even more. Mr Alan Thompson, then deputy secretary, believed the group had been set up precipitately to pre-empt the department's own review of the sector.

So four of the five measures introduced by the DES after the general election helped to exacerbate relations between local and central government and weaken the local authority position in higher education. There was one important exception: Mr Christopher Price's select committee report came down in favour of retaining the local government stake.

Reporting in October 1980, the select committee called for the creation of a national body to overhaul the funding of polytechnics and colleges. The report left the financial details open but said that local education authorities should maintain their presence in higher education.

It added: "But we also believe that it will only be acceptable for local authorities to retain their stake in higher education if all of them can restrain themselves from excessive and unreasonable interference in the running of large, developed polytechnics with the skills and competence to look after themselves."

The select committee's qualified support of the local government case came too late. Four months after the committee reported, a leaked government document revealed that the DES was already asking for Cabinet approval to take higher education out of local government altogether.

The local authority associations launched a vigorous rearguard action. Mr Alastair Lawton, a leading Tory and chairman of CLEA, tried to mobilize the party networks to persuade Mr Carlisle to change his mind.

But local government's political credit had apparently run out. Mr Carlisle agreed to include in his consultative document a CLEA alternative to the department's own plan for nationalization. The phrasing of the document makes it clear, however, that Mr Carlisle favours a bold shift of higher education to central control.

Unless the local authorities are able to pull off a startling political victory in the weeks ahead, the Government is likely to bring out a White Paper at the turn of the year which will signal the end of local government's 15-year reign over public sector higher education.

Next week: after the Green Paper.

need for some sort of reorganization even more urgent.

A peculiarity of the pooling system prevented cuts from being distributed to local authorities on anything other than an arbitrary basis. The DES working group under assistant secretary Mr Stephen Jones was asked to devise a way of avoiding the random and often unfair cuts experienced by colleges in the first year of the capped pool.

Aided by the local authorities, the Stephen Jones group inched towards a new method of distributing the cuts, based on a system of national average costs of students in public sector institutions. But although the new system promised to be more equitable than the random cuts which preceded it, it was based on a mathematical formula administered by the DES: the role of the 90 local education authorities ostensibly planning and funding higher education came to look increasingly superfluous.

Another of the measures taken by the DES — establishment of the "transitory" committees of national UGC — also helped to underline the weak position of local government in planning higher education.

The department's original proposal to set up six transitory committees investigating special planning difficulties had to be whittled down to three after the local authority associations said that they could not provide enough officers to man all the groups. In fact, the local authority associations employed only a single officer specializing in higher education. CLEA could muster fewer than 10 of its own education officials to cover the whole of education policy.

In a major effort to establish its credibility in higher education CLEA did establish a higher education group — a subcommittee of members which a special interest in polytechnics and colleges. But it was a move which soured relations with the DES even more. Mr Alan Thompson, then deputy secretary, believed the group had been set up precipitately to pre-empt the department's own review of the sector.

So four of the five measures introduced by the DES after the general election helped to exacerbate relations between local and central government and weaken the local authority position in higher education. There was one important exception: Mr Christopher Price's select committee report came down in favour of retaining the local government stake.

Reporting in October 1980, the select committee called for the creation of a national body to overhaul the funding of polytechnics and colleges. The report left the financial details open but said that local education authorities should maintain their presence in higher education.

It added: "But we also believe that it will only be acceptable for local authorities to retain their stake in higher education if all of them can restrain themselves from excessive and unreasonable interference in the running of large, developed polytechnics with the skills and competence to look after themselves."

The select committee's qualified support of the local government case came too late. Four months after the committee reported, a leaked government document revealed that the DES was already asking for Cabinet approval to take higher education out of local government altogether.

The local authority associations launched a vigorous rearguard action. Mr Alastair Lawton, a leading Tory

Science's crystal-ball gazers come down to earth

Those who predict tread hazardous ground. The annals of history are filled with individuals rash enough to state categorically the outcome of current trends and events, and scientists – who really should know better – invariably come very low in the league of prophets who chance to get it right.

"Space travel is utter bilge," said Sir Richard van der Riet Woolley, the then British Astronomer Royal in 1956. A year later the launch of Sputnik quickly put paid to that notion.

Similarly Ptolemy warned that travel over the equator was impossible because the Sun's vertical rays would boil the ocean and set wooden ships alight.

And in 1899, the director of the US patent office urged that his job and office should be scrapped because "everything that can be invented has been invented".

Yet it would be premature to dismiss present attempts to assess the future shape of society as useless intellectual diversions. Given the long development lag – which can frequently reach decades – that now occurs between research innovation and the market appearance of its commercial spin-off, then accurate assessments of future societies and their requirements are of vital importance to most governments and major companies.

There is little profit in spending years and millions of pounds developing a product which society no longer needs.

This is the business of the futurist (or futurologist depending on your preferred nomenclature) who combines social, environmental, economic, scientific, technological and other considerations. Forecasting involves the detailing of all possible futures, prediction is an attempt to say which of these will occur.

And, to judge from most speakers at the seminar, "The Next Ten Years – The Unprecedented Opportunity", organized by Sperry Univac, the computer company, at St Paul de

Robin McKie looks into the future with eminent forecasters at a recent seminar on the next ten years

Vence, near Nice, current trends indicate a far from rosy picture for the world in general and Britain in particular.

One of the UK's most renowned scientists, Sir Ieuan Maddock, the principal of St Edmund Hall, Oxford, detailed a vision of an overpopulated, underdeveloped planet, held to ransom by those few countries in possession of invaluable resources.

This refers not just to oil, but to precious minerals, critical for new technologies, such as aluminium, copper, gold, lead, and mercury which now face serious world shortages.

Sir Ieuan also pointed out that despite an excellent showing by Britain in inventing and innovation and in the awards of Nobel prizes – a total of 56 so far, compared with Russia's nine and Japan's three – we were lagging further and further behind as an industrial nation.

Since 1950 our products' share of the world market had slumped from 25 per cent to under 10 per cent.

Our problem was that perennial complaint of failing to exploit new inventions – a view starkly illustrated by the difficulties faced by Dr Michael Duff, of the image processing group, at University College, London.

His team has developed an advanced image processing device,

known as Clip 4, capable of large scale scanning of photographs, data sequences and charts, and of recognition of desired features.

The device has obvious potential in medical slides and X-ray scanning and could also be useful for industry by using it to screen production processes to select rejects in egg and biscuit packaging or in component manufacture systems.

Yet, despite these possible uses, Dr Duff and his team failed to interest one UK company although their device is more advanced than any other of its kind in the world.

The general feeling that it was time for this particular rot to stop was expressed most forcefully by the seminar's chairman, Professor Donald Michie, of Edinburgh University's machine intelligence department.

"Are we going to see ourselves turned into a tourist nation, or are we going to draw a line in the dust and remobilize a technical spirit in Britain?"

Just how that can be achieved was never satisfactorily resolved by the seminar. British industrialists and academics stand fairly accused of lack of entrepreneurial flair but what is the root cause and how can it be corrected?

Tinkering with the system – be it education, the economy, professional institutions or others – was constantly recommended but without the consensus of a common unifying goal, this becomes largely irrelevant. This unity was last apparent during the war, claimed Sir Ieuan, and without it we will continue to decline.

It was a view which led science fiction writer Harry Harrison, whose early novel *Make Room, Make Room* (filmed as *Soylent Green*) predicted many current ecological concerns, to recommend his own programme for saving Britain.

"Firstly, declare war on America – the reputation after losing would set up industry quite nicely. Then abolish the class system by closing all the public schools. Finally Oxford and



Cambridge universities should be turned into museums and MIT staff should be hired to set up new technology schools.

Like all good jokes it has a grain of sense to it.

Yet it would be misleading to imply that all the assembled experts predicted only doom and decline. Research and discovery will be picked up for development sooner or later, if they fill a particular need – the pressures of a market economy will ensure that.

In the field of artificial intelligence and robotics, at least, two confident predictions were made.

Professor Edward Feigenbaum, of Stanford University's computer sciences department, predicted that within a few years specially programmed small computers would be capable of codifying the knowledge of experts in various fields, such as doctors or engineers, as well as the inference procedures they use to make judgments.

The result would be computers which could carry out medical diagnosis, equipment repair, and many

other functions that are presently the domain of the specialized expert.

And on the robotics side, Professor Robert McGhee, of Ohio State University's department of electrical engineering, predicted that within three years, the first man-made walking machines would be developed which would be ultimately capable of carrying humans and large cargoes.

These six-legged devices would open vast stretches of the world's terrain inaccessible to wheeled transport and would allow exploitation of complete areas of new resources.

Only time will tell if these developments will take place. Yet should be remembered that predictions tend to have a habit of track record that negative prophecies which seek to limit the state of technological development.

As science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke put it: "When a distinguished and elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states something is impossible, he is probably wrong."

Olga Wojtas visits the Beshara School of Esoteric Education in the Scottish borders where time is divided between physical work and study

A religious balancing act

"We don't offer lights, miracles or levitation," says one member of the Beshara School of Esoteric Education. "What we offer is really hard work."

Not to mention, according to a Beshara pamphlet, a source of knowledge which embraces and unites all apparent contradictions.

For while the school defines education as "ending out what is within" (in this case the quest for self-knowledge which many would see as innate in humanity), it claims that although its aim is identical to other traditions concerned with man's true nature, it is unprecedented in its method of proceeding from the answer, from the principle to the particular.

The school takes as its main subject for intensive study the works of a twelfth-century Andalusian mystic, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, a highly controversial figure among Muslims. According to one expert on comparative religion, he "saw Islam down the river into the hands of the pantheists", but Beshara sees his doctrine of the unity of existence as being the essence of all religions.

This doctrine states that everything is part of a single reality, which is unique and indivisible.

Beshara means "omen of joy" and is said to be the word spoken by Gabriel to Mary at the annunciation. The Beshara school sprang from the hippy movement when a group of people on a Gloucestershire farm realized, as one of them says, that "this effusion of love was all very well, but it had to be directed by knowledge. So an environment was provided where people could develop spiritually with a balance between the emotions, the intellect and the physical side."

This concern for balance is very

apparent in the school's present location at Chisholme House in the Scottish borders. When the Beshara Trust bought it in the early 1970s, the dilapidated mansion was on the verge of complete disrepair, with thoroughly untrustworthy floors and a flooded basement – the water had never been cut off and some passing boy scouts had neglected to turn off a tap.

Chisholme is now in the latter stages of being restored to its Georgian magnificence as a result of largely self-taught painstaking reconstruction.

As much time is spent on physical work as on study – two days of study are followed by two days of work throughout the year – and students build, cook, clean, paint and work in the vegetable garden or with the livestock.

There is a considerable emphasis on the quality of work, that things should be done as well as possible.

While some students plan dinner for 30, others are grappling with the concept: "God is as he was, and is at every moment in a new configuration." ("This is one state," says someone, "but it has to be described in two aspects for the intellect to grasp it.")

Despite desultory advertising, there is no lack of applicants for the weekend or 10-day introductory courses, or the six-month intensive course which costs £1,500. Beshara has no capital behind it, and the fees simply reflect the cost of courses and staff salaries.

The considerable commitment of

time and money, one Beshara member confides, is itself a good filter system, but he adds that anyone who really wants to come will be able to make the necessary arrangements.

There have been several Beshara courses in the extra-mural departments of Edinburgh, Birmingham, Oxford and London universities, and Beshara members will address any interested groups, such as university philosophical societies.

'We start from the point of view of one existent, the principle from which each of the religions comes'

Previous courses have included executives, architects, a smattering of aristocrats and academics. "The idea that reality is one and multiple is very simple, and doesn't require academic ability," says a course supervisor. "Academic ability can be an advancement because it imposes a rational intellectual structure on it."

There is a reliance on instinct and intuition at Beshara, in the absence of any stated moral code. Neither is it marked by form or dogma. "It seems to invite definition by negatives. It does not seek to proselytize, and is quick to stress it is not a

religion, a study of God, or a philosophy, as it is based on the nature of reality, which transcends these things.

There is a strong implication that religions are limited by their forms and dogmas. There is also the assertion that while the world religions have had their esoteric traditions which have gone beyond these limitations, these have been made available to very few people, and have been strictly governed by teachers revealing information only when they felt the disciple was ready for it.

"Here all the information is available to everyone from the beginning," says a course supervisor. "It's like the drawing of a maze. When you're a child, you start at the outside and get into a terrible muddle trying to get to the centre. When you're an adult, you know to start at the centre and work your way out. We start from the point of view of one existent, the principle from which each of the religions comes."

The world religions are unlikely to see it that way. There are undoubtedly great differences among them, and although there is an increasing awareness of common ground, there will be inevitable ultimate disagreement, each claiming its own revelation to be the truth.

One Beshara member admits that the school will have little appeal for staunch religious practitioners. "If you need that sort of membership of a religion to define your relationship with God, it's very difficult to come to him, because he is beyond de-

scription and beyond religion." Most of the people at the school have become disillusioned with religion, says another member. Religions have been determined by the understanding of a particular people at a particular time.

Some might say the climate has never been more fertile for the establishing of a group such as Beshara – there is disillusion with the mainline churches, as well as with secularism and political ideologies, and there is a craving for a fringe of the exotic.

Beshara does not correspond to the experience of many prominent religious people in different religions. That is not to say it cannot provide an answer for some people.

Those on the course agree to give their lives meaning and direction. And Beshara is not intended any way as an escape from the world; it is not an alternative lifestyle or a commune – nobody, student, is permanent.

"People must stand on their own feet, knowing their personal connection with reality," says a supervisor. "Established education never lets you relate to yourself, only in terms of your relation to the science you are learning. So much education is devoted to the one aspect of learning."

"Here, rather than study a philosophy, you realize what you are studying is so much what you are to become that you transform yourself. People begin to get beyond their veneer."

The Beshara School will have an open day on Sunday, September 14, at Chisholme, Robertson Road, Hawick, Roxburghshire, tel: 01600 215.

Events

EXHIBITIONS: continuing Until August 15, Riverside Theatre foyer, New University of Ulster, Coleraine. Stuart Roy: photographs and illustrations.

Until August 16, Whitechapel Gallery, London. Gilbert and George Photographs 1971-80: photographs and photograms. Also *Breaking Through: Television from East London*.

Until September 6, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Bretton Hall College, near Wakefield. Austin Wright Retrospective Exhibition: sculpture, drawings and prints.

Until September 13, Commonwealth Institute, London. The Festival of Sri Lanka: cultural heritage and contemporary life.

Until September 13, Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. *The Avant-Garde in Europe 1955-1970*, the collection of the Städtisches Museum, Moenchengladbach.

Until September 13, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Gerald Reitlinger Memorial Exhibition: Chinese, Japanese, Islamic, Indian and European ceramics and paintings.

Until September 20, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. *Legacy of a Baker's Son: drawings from the W. F. Watson bequest*.

Until October 4, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. *Old and Modern Masters of Photography, The Chalon Brothers: landscape, the theatre and caricature in the work of John James Chalon (1778-1854) and Alfred Edward Chalon (1781-1866, and The Art of the Book*.

Until October 11, Victoria and Albert Museum, New Glass, 273 exhibits from the Corning Museum of Glass, New York.

Until November 1, Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, London. *Cut Here: paper cut-out toys and models*.

Until October 11, Hayward Gallery, London. *Picasso's Picasso*, an exhibition from the Musée Picasso, Paris. EXHIBITIONS: forthcoming Opening September 9, Victoria and Albert Museum. Modern Japanese Lacquer Art: a family of Kyoto craftsmen. Part of the "Japan in Britain" season.

Opening November 18, Hayward Gallery, London. Sir Edwin Lutyens. 500 items including photographs, drawings, models, paintings, furniture, objects d'art and personal mementos.

Discussion paper from Arts Council

A 25-page consultation document has just been issued by the Arts Council which is intended to stimulate discussion in the shaping of the council's educational policies.

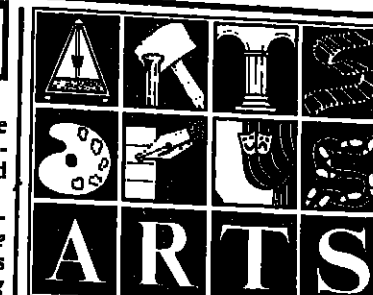
Called simply *The Arts Council and Education*, it outlines the educational developments that have taken place since the appointment three years ago of an education officer. It points out that the council's chartered obligation to make the arts more accessible means more than making them physically available.

The implication is that Arts Council clients should aim to collaborate with those who, through their educational skills, are able to develop and improve knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts. "Already there is evidence that this is possible, although not easy to achieve."

The document also states that the council has no intention of becoming involved in education for education's sake. "Neither the council nor its clients have the staff, finances or knowledge to become direct providers of education in the arts. It would be a misuse of resources to duplicate what educators are expressly financed to do."

Instead, clients should be persuaded that efforts to increase public understanding and involvement must be an integral part of their enterprise.

The document gives a detailed description of the function of the education unit, and of the art, dance, drama, literature, music, regional and touring departments.



C. A. Johnson on the fruits of a collaboration at Bretton Hall College between the second year drama students and the former Open Space director Charles Marowitz.

A wedding of ideas in Leeds

When his Open Space Theatre had to close, Charles Marowitz was free to accept a temporary lectureship at Bretton Hall College. The production of Gogol's *Marriage* recently seen at Leeds Playhouse is the result of his work with students from the second year of the honours degree course in drama.

Working with a professional theatre director of Marowitz's calibre, I was told, had been exasperating and exhilarating.

Mr Marowitz said that he had originally intended a project on the Russian director, Vsevolod Meyerhold, which was to have led to the making of a play on Meyerhold's life. This play had to be abandoned, as it was both too ambitious and not feasible in view of the age of the students. *Marriage* was chosen as a compromise – as a play Meyerhold did not do, but might have done, after the success of his *Inspector General* – and given a loosely Meyerholdian treatment: "choreographed" movements, fantasy scenes, a non-naturalistic approach.

Marriage, "a completely improbable occurrence," and Gogol's parodic version of the comedy of love and marriage, was first performed in 1842. Moscow's Malaya Bronnaya Theatre brought it to the Edinburgh Festival in 1979; it was also screened on BBC television on July 10.

Kochkarev (played by Mike Vince) – smooth, chubbily and devilishly energetic – makes it his life's ambition to marry his friend, Podkolesin (Tim Kedge, lecturer in drama at Agafya Tikhonovna (Lindsay Thompson), a marriageable girl of the merchant class. Podkolesin is one of Gogol's shy bachelors, so tongue-tied in the presence of the fair sex that they can express themselves only in monosyllables. At the critical moment he is seized by terror at the thought of being married because he has never been married before, and makes his escape through a window.

The Meyerholdian-grotesque in this production comes and goes rather than informs the playing throughout. This was done deliberately. Paul Cowen (lecturer in drama and joint director) explained, "so as not to expose too cruelly the inadequacies of inexperienced student actors". The approach was at its most successful here in the visualization of the inner world of Podkolesin and Agafya Tikhonovna. His fantasy life teems with Russian beauties

will remain there until September 13. The emphasis of the collection is on decorated ceramics of the 17th century in all the cultures represented. The Japanese section of the exhibition will be on view at Sotheby's in New Bond Street, London from August 4 to 28 and at the Ashmolean from September 17 to October 25.

The exhibition will also mark the publication by Philip Wilson Ltd. of *Eastern Ceramics and Other Works of Art From The Collection of Gerald Reitlinger*.

Next Wednesday sees the last leg of the Crawford Centre's (St Andrews University) musical journey following the route of the song, *The Road to the Isles*. They have already passed by Tunnal and Loch Rannoch and Lochaber, through the Jacobite song landscape of Prince Charlie country, and "the blue islands from the Skerries to the Lewis." Wednesday's location is the famed "far Coolins" of Skye, home of the most famous of the Gaelic bards. The programme will be introduced by the broadcaster and writer Finlay J. Macdonald, and the musical contributions will come from Kathleen Macdonald (soprano), Rhona Mackay (clarsach), Alison Kinaird (clarsach), pipe majors Angus and Allan Macdonald.

Also scheduled for November is an exhibition of paintings by artists of the First World War at the Crewe and Alsager College-art gallery. The college has reached an agreement with the Imperial War Museum which means that the four-week show will represent the only chance to see the paintings outside London.

On the day the exhibition opens, November 11, the college is also mounting a special performance of *Oh! What a Lovely War* in the Axis Theatre; in addition Mr Joseph Darracott of the War Museum will deliver a lecture on the contents of the exhibition.

The Arts Council has invited applications to fill the vacancies that are likely to occur on its specialist panels and committees from April 1 next year. These advise the council on its policy for art, dance, drama, literature, music, arts, films, regional, touring, training, housing the arts, and special applications.

Proposals must be accompanied by the recommended person's experience and qualifications to serve on one of the panels or committees. They should be sent to the secretary-general at the Arts Council by September 30.

More than 400 pieces selected from the Gerald Reitlinger collection of Chinese, Japanese, Islamic, Indian and European ceramics have gone on show at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, and

dressed in white who form pretty tableaux on the Playhouse stage based on illustrations (by Blitbit?) to Russian folk tales, hers with swash-buckling suitors who sweep her off her preposterous feet or that she carbonizes with a glance.

The approach to the text is sloppy, which may also be Meyerholdian. This play is after all vintage Gogol with its pre-Freudian dream or nightmare world. This version, derived from an ancient and inaccurate translation, loses a lot of the sparkling surrealism of the original and produces none of the unique Gogolian frisson.

After Leeds the production went to the Ilkley Literature Festival, when there was a complete change of cast, made up of yet more Bretton Hall second-year students. Leeds and Ilkley represented a "bleeding" of young students into what it is hoped will be a career in the professional theatre. In training actors for the 1980s and 1990s the BA honours drama course is still experimenting to get the right mix.

The author is a lecturer in the Department of Russian Studies at Leeds University.

A retrospective exhibition to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the sculptor Austin Wright, is at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Bretton Hall College, until September 6. More than 100 items are on display, including drawings and prints that cover 40 years of work. They range in scale and content from his early six-inch figures and wood carvings to the recent large aluminium pieces designed for the open air.

Between 1961 and 1964 Wright was Gregory fellow in sculpture at Leeds University, and in 1977 he was awarded an honorary doctorate at York.

The first exhibition covering the whole career of Edwin Lutyens has been planned by the Arts Council at London's Hayward Gallery for November. Lutyens is best known to the English public as the architect of the Indian capital New Delhi and for the fine country houses he built in the home counties at the turn of the century. The exhibition will be designed by Piers Gough.

Also scheduled for November is an exhibition of paintings by artists of the First World War at the Crewe and Alsager College-art gallery. The college has reached an agreement with the Imperial War Museum which means that the four-week show will represent the only chance to see the paintings outside London.

On the day the exhibition opens, November 11, the college is also mounting a special performance of *Oh! What a Lovely War* in the Axis Theatre; in addition Mr Joseph Darracott of the War Museum will deliver a lecture on the contents of the exhibition.

The Arts Council has invited applications to fill the vacancies that are likely to occur on its specialist panels and committees from April 1 next year. These advise the council on its policy for art, dance, drama, literature, music, arts, films, regional, touring, training, housing the arts, and special applications.

Proposals must be accompanied by the recommended person's experience and qualifications to serve on one of the panels or committees. They should be sent to the secretary-general at the Arts Council by September 30.

Alan Franks

The RSC – a new season of Shakespeare at the Aldwych

"What's aught but as 'tis valued?" is an important line in *Troilus and Cressida*, a play that is concerned with things being worth precisely what people are prepared to pay for them – Helen's face, for example, being worth the launching of all those ships and the spilling of all that blood. From the latest production at the RSC one must conclude that this play is worth very little: it certainly isn't valued very highly.

The director is Terry Hands who, perhaps through his long association with the history plays, has accumulated a large stock of effects for distracting his audience's attention during what he considers to be the boring bits. His *Troilus* is a showcase for these effects, largely because he seems to think that anyone in it who gives a longish speech must be a bore. Hence he surrounds the speech-makers with people who yawn, try to interrupt, take pills, go for walks, eat messy pieces of fruit, tear up boxes, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. This is "diverting" in the sense that one is "diverted" by a pickpocket's accomplice: we are tricked into looking away at crucial moments, and are cheated of the play. The strongest impressions are not of words (and it is a play that excels in reason and debate) but of alarms and excursions, the scenery, the lighting, the echo chamber, the costumes, Calchas the wheeler-dealer, Achilles in drag, Nestor as a tortoise – all inventions of the director, all superficial. And all presided over by Joe Melia as the least cynical Thersites of all time, not spewing his disgust at the audience, but insinuating himself and the play Max Miller-style: "Come on, missis, it's just a bit of fun".

What looks like fun, but doesn't feel like it, is the same director's *As You Like It*, which is certainly cheerful and a Sinead Cusack's Celia is delightfully but is forced in its gaiety, again suffering from over-straining for effect. It is also not very well cast, with Susan Fleetwood's rather jumpy, breathless and coy Rosalind very badly matched with John Bowe's roaring, boisterous Orlando. And both of them so engrossed in their own emotional (or athletic) excesses that they are left little capacity for loving each other. But the quiet moments – by definition those moments when the yelling Orlando is absent – work well, particularly Rosalind's "The poor world is almost six thousand years old" and any scene featuring Derek Godfrey's rounded Jacques. The songs, though, are not particularly enjoyable, and the closing revel (lovers and garlands everywhere) is over-elaborate, and remote. The people on the stage smile and dance and may be having a marvellous time, but not much of their surging joy slopes over the footlights.

John Barton's *Merchant of Venice* also gets a bit too flowery at the end, but otherwise is such a discreet, calm production that one could almost believe the play to be walking alone, without the directorial crutches that so hamper the other two productions. Emphasis falls on the right scenes, the right words, the right characters, and there are some good performances, particularly David Suchet's Shylock, which carries great weight. Less nervous, more self-assured than usual Suchet's Shylock hates Antonio less on personal grounds than on the point of tribal honour. Sinead Cusack's Portia, too, is a strong performance: the ritualistic solemnity of the casket scenes emphasizes her vulnerability and her nature bearing in the courtroom scene displays an original degree of compassion.

Lynne Truss

The economic crisis and the crisis in economics

Graham Hallett thinks the teaching of the subject at A level is partly to blame for its present problems

A Conservative MP recently attacked Mrs Thatcher for her A level economics, and a Labour MP criticized a Nobel Prize winner in economics for "not understanding A level economics." These criticisms raise some intriguing questions not only about A level economics but about economics in general. Scientists or engineers may reach different conclusions about the design of bridges or power stations, but they rarely criticize each other for not understanding A level physics, and still more rarely for accepting A level physics.

If, apparently, there is so little agreement on the basis of the subject, can economics claim to be a science at all? Especially in the field of macroeconomics (concerned with inflation and unemployment), economists have become something of a joke because, while claiming to be practitioners of an exact science, they produce diametrically opposed pronouncements and grotesquely incorrect forecasts.

Dr Edward de Bono recently gave an explanation: "Economics is in its current mess because it has been taught as a descriptive subject rather than an operative one (THES, May 8)." I am unable to say whether I agree with this explanation, as I do not know what it means. But there is little doubt that economics is in a mess, that this has something to do with methodology. Criticisms of current academic economics are not confined to practitioners of other disciplines. Several distinguished economic historians and students of the history of economic have expressed doubts about the present state of the subject, and a recent textbook on macroeconomics was sub-titled, 'A guide to the crisis in economics' (J. A. Trevithick, *Inflation*, Penguin 1977).

The current criticisms are linked to a change in the nature of the subject which was once known as "political economy". The "political economists" of the early nineteenth century, as well as early twentieth century economists like Alfred Marshall, produced a blend of simple (but well thought out) theory with historical and institutional material. Marshall used his considerable mathematical knowledge merely as a means of reaching conclusions about the real world which could be expressed in English. In his own words, he worked on the rules:

1. Use mathematics as a shorthand language, rather than an engine of inquiry.
2. Keep to terms till you have done your thinking.
3. Translate into English.
4. Then illustrate by examples that are important in real life.
5. Burn the mathematics.
6. If you can't succeed in 4, burn everything. This last I often did. (A. C. Pigou, *Memorials of Alfred Marshall*)

If present day economists followed that heroic advice, there would be a dramatic decline in the volume of economic literature.

In recent years, economics, like other social sciences, has become highly fragmented. No longer at the "highest" levels, it is theory blended with history and institutional study to illuminate current problems. Economic historians emulate Lucky Jim in their research into aspects of late medieval shipbuilding, or similar minutiae, while historians of economic thought unearth little known predecessors of increasingly obscure economists. The most fashionable type of economics, consists of the "long chains of deductive reasoning", for which, in Marshall's opinion, economics provided no scope. The trouble with this deductive approach is that the conclusions are as good, or as bad, as the assumptions; garbage in, garbage out. Without a con-

siderable practical knowledge of economic organization, as well as a historical and international background, deductive analysis can easily lead to grotesquely false conclusions.

Similarly, with undergraduate teaching. To undertake any useful study of economics, or any of the social sciences, a student should begin with a good general education, including a knowledge of history in all its aspects, some mathematics, and a reasonable command of at least one foreign language, as well as his own. He can then begin to study economic systems and recent economic developments, being gradually introduced to the usefulness and limitations of economic theory in explaining the complex phenomena of the real world.

The approach adopted in Great Britain today is quite different. Partly because of the unparalleled specialization of British secondary education, students lack the necessary foundation for the heady wine of economic theory. In most A level (and university) macroeconomics courses, students are given an account of "classical" versus "Keynesian" views which bears very little resemblance to what was actually written either by Keynes, or by the economists he described as "classical": Robertson and Pigou. (Even in the *General Theory*, Keynes explicitly rejected the "Keynesian" case in which increased demand expands output with no increase in the price level. Robertson and Pigou did not assert that there could be no unemployment and no fluctuations in output; they both wrote excellent studies of industrial fluctuation from which a great deal may still be learnt).

In consequence, A level and first-year university students tend to repeat parrot-fashion a grossly oversimplified version of some of the ideas in one of Lord Keynes' books, accompanied by statements like "Keynes proved that the money supply had no effect on prices", or "Keynes proved that the classical economists were all wrong". (By classical, incidentally, they generally have in mind Adam Smith and his successors).

Faced, sometimes, with what Keynes actually wrote on the relation of the money supply to inflation, or on the virtues of a market economy, some students are taken aback; they begin to read Keynes and think things out for themselves - their first truly educational experience in economics. But in other cases the intellectually deadening effects of A level economics are incurable.

Of course, the fact that the Keynes of neo-Keynesian economics is not the Keynes of the books and essays published under his name does not say anything about which is correct. The historic Keynes may have been wrong; he was certainly not always consistent. But the demonstrable misrepresentation of Keynes' views illustrates the extent to which neo-Keynesianism partakes of religion - and a primitive type of religion at that - rather than science or letters.

Criticisms of being doctrinaire are, of course, more often applied to "monetarists" than to "Keynesians". There are different schools of monetarism, but the term - in any sense which is more than a disapproving noise - refers to theories of the nature of inflation and unemployment developed in the 1950s and 1970s. "Monetarist" theories draw on older traditions which were rejected by the followers of Keynes.

Most economists from Hume to Keynes, including Marx, were "monetarist" in the sense that they believed that there was a connexion between the money supply and inflation.

"Monetarist", as well as Keynesian, theories need to be tested against the historical record, and one American "monetarist" economist, Milton Friedman, re-introduced the study of monetary history with his *Monetary History of the United States*.

There has, however, been a campaign in the UK to represent monetarists as people who want to grind the faces of the poor, and who welcome high unemployment. This campaign has been so successful that it has become almost impossible to use the term. In other countries, the Keynesian - monetarist controversies have been less polarized, and the terms themselves have been less subject to "persuasive definition". As the author of the best book on the subject comments, he would probably be described as "monetarist" in the UK and a "Keynesian" in the USA (K. A. Chrysalis, *Controversies in British Macroeconomics*, p.6).

However, some of the economists who have made a name for themselves as "monetarists" are as open to criticism for their methodology as the Keynesians. In the course of rediscovering the importance of monetary mechanism, they have tended to adopt a crude mechanical view of its influence, from the analysis of other economists such as D. H. Robertson or the Keynes of the *Theory of Money* (1930).

What sort of economics do we therefore need? A training in economics which could be considered part of a liberal education would begin in the schools with what used to be called civics, and economic history of a wide-ranging international kind. At the undergraduate level, it would include some acquaintance with the work of the great economists of the past, such as Smith, Marx, Mill, Keynes and Schumpeter, examining the different views they put forward so that students were not imprisoned by, every passing fashion. Simple theory would be illustrated and

assessed in the light of historical and international experience. Advanced theory would be left to the post-graduate level, when students would be able to take it with a pinch of salt.

If economics is not like that, one must ask why. Part of the answer lies in serious imperfections in the academic market place. Economists - except for the occasional saint - have to consider their careers, and the current reward system is not always calculated to encourage education and useful research. The career structure in schools has encouraged greater and greater specialization at A level, while at universities there appears to be a competition as to whom can bamboozle students the most.

In the market for publications, there is a premium on novelty and obfuscation: a new, striking and completely unrealistic theory attracts far more attention and kudos than any amount of eclectic applied work based on principles which most economists accept. These imperfections in the academic industry have attracted notably little attention from economists who pounce on the slightest real or imagined imperfection in manufacturing industry.

There is, however, a growing "revisionist" view that what we need is a modern form of political economy. Indeed, in the better type of economic journalism, in business economics, and even in some corners of the universities, this kind of economics is being practised. It is less contentious than the type of economics which has been the subject of criticism, but it requires a greater range of intellectual and moral qualities. Keynes put it very well:

The study of economics does not seem to require any specialized gifts of an unusually high order. It is not, intellectually regarded, a very easy subject compared with the highest branches of philosophy and pure science. Yet good, or even competent, economists are the rarest of birds. An easy sub-

ject, at which very few excel. The paradox finds its explanation, perhaps, in that the economist must possess a combination of gifts. He must reach a high standard in several different directions and must combine talents not often found together. He must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher - in some degree, he must understand symbols and speak in particular in terms of the general and touch abstract and concrete. The same flight of thought, he must study the present in the light of the past for the purpose of the future.

No part of man's nature or his institutions must lie entirely aside his regard. He must be purposeful and disinterested and incorruptible as an artist, sometimes as near the earnest politician.

(J. M. Keynes 'Alfred Marshall's Essays in Biography', *Collected Works*, Vol. X p. 173)

This is, of course, an ideal, but one to which few economists have come close. It will require considerable changes in attitudes to Keynes's ideal of the rounded, civilized economist the norm, but universities should reorganize to become stronger and use their resources more effectively. It seemed to me clear that if such an inquiry was needed for the medical schools another would be needed for the non-medical schools; and that was why I asked Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, who was as free from self-interest as Brian Flowers had been in his medical inquiry, to work with a group of eminent colleagues covering the spectrum of subjects studied within the university.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It was of course difficult to have a definitive policy until one knew to what net deduction of expenditure each school had suffered. But already the court had taken steps to anticipate disaster. In July 1980 it set aside £1.5m as an emergency fund and the UGC reinforced this by a fund of £3m to safeguard certain postgraduate students threatened with extinction.

All the non-medical schools (including LSE which increased its income on overseas student fee account by nearly £400,000) got some of the £1.5m, and two got sizeable amounts. Five non-medical schools got grants from the £3m fund.

There was never any question of my advising the court this summer to indulge in hair-raising rationalizations in which whole schools would lose their identity or to allocate funds in a way which would preempt the immensely important debate which must be conducted next session about the future of the university's institutions.

Short as time is, and vital as it is for the structured debate in the university's committees to start at once, I would not force the pace any more than I would have expected the medical schools to bow down and implement without discussing the Flowers report. What I have done is to point out some of the directions which, I think, in the years to come the university may have to move. I have also tried to bring into the open some of the issues which individual schools ought to begin to consider.

But if the court will hasten slowly, it will not be making a *pro rata* allocation - whatever that means. It never has. There has always been an "unequal" distribution of grant to take account of the maintenance cost of new buildings, increases in rent, increases in student numbers, take-overs, new academic initiatives etc.

In the old days the variations were mostly pluses. The grants rose - but disproportionately. The schools which expanded most rapidly, acquired the most new buildings and invested in big science, got the lion's share. Medicine got a substantial boost in the early 1970s. The medium-sized schools also advanced but some less swiftly than others. Central activities designed to be of use to all schools multiplied and took a share of the spoils.

When I became vice chancellor I put to the court proposals for increasing over three years the grant to some of the less fortunate schools. This was to be achieved partly by reducing the grant to others and partly by saving savings in the centre. Schools were also invited to put forward academic initiatives and some of them got further sums to sustain these initiatives. In all the court agreed to transfer £1,250,000. For instance, LSE until it could take advantage of the space created by the new library had for long been impeded. Now it was to gain on both sides. It got £100,000 to raise its bus line and £95,000 for academic initiative. Queen Elizabeth College got the same total sum and Queen Mary College £225,000. The central administration had its allocation reduced by £250,000. This is somewhat different from the story *The THES* carried a few months ago of a university so entangled in bureaucratic procedures that it was incapable of formulating a positive policy.

Another criticism levelled in *The THES* was that there was positive policy on overseas student fees. It

Justifying the pursuit of the unorthodox

With the real threats of redundancies and closures, we are now at the edge of a catastrophe. And yet there may still be time to avoid accelerating down the cusp to a level where British universities will be debased to a state where they are no longer worthy of the name "university", perhaps for centuries. It may be too late. It may be that we have already travelled too far down to claw our way back. But at least those of us who love what universities stand for should go down fighting.

A university is, or should be, a temple to the love of learning, a centre for reasoned argument, to a large degree a retreat for somewhat sequestered scholarship. If it is not these things, the best it can hope to be is a kind of amorphous technical college. The centre of a university is philosophy – the love of knowledge, and that for its own sake. The Gadarene rush of many academics to show that their work is "applied" or directly applicable, or "relevant", must take a significant share of the responsibility for the decline of university values and their loss of public esteem. For once we start measuring the worth of university work by the pernicious criterion of "relevance", we have either to change the nature of a university, or fall against this inappropriate criterion. The problem of induction raised by Hume, Leavis's revaluation of great literary figures, the proof of the binomial theorem, the mathematical relation between physical stimuli and sensation, are none of them directly relevant to anything outside themselves, in the sense that knowledge of these things is not necessary to the builder of motor cars or to merchant bankers.

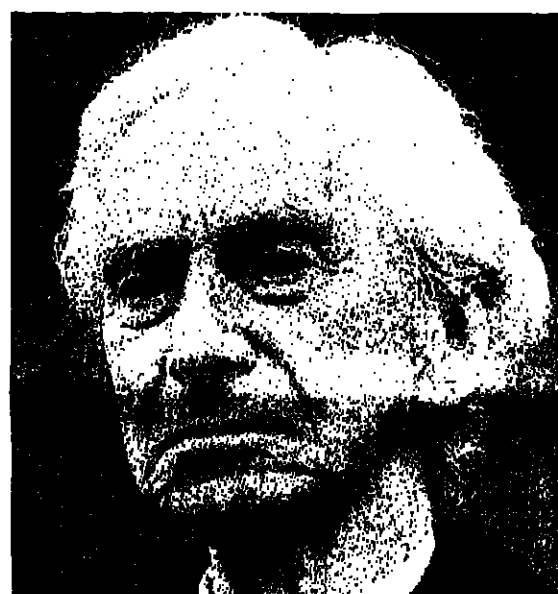
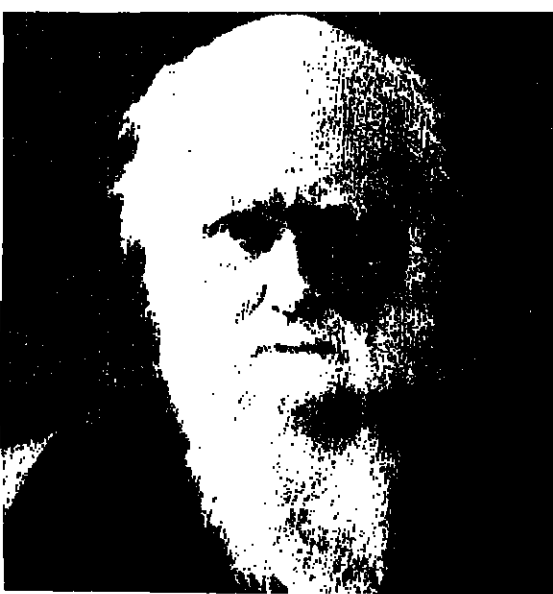
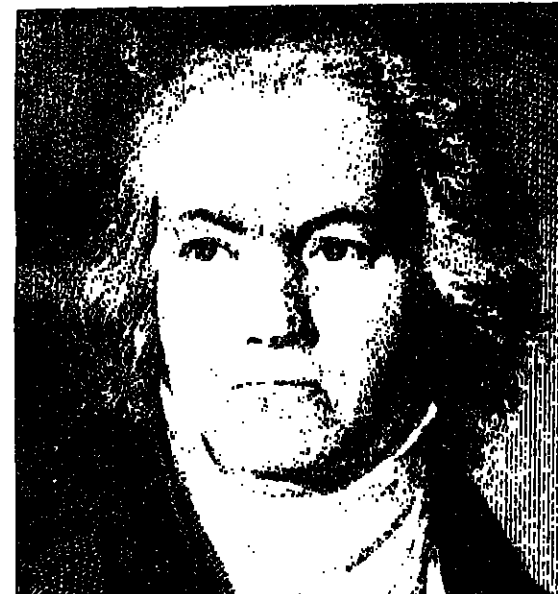
And yet universities do have a function – or two. One is that the pursuit of these "irrelevancies" often ends up being applied, and finding applications that research more directed to application could never find. Galileo and Newton were interested in pure science; they were not directing their research to military and industrial problems, and yet without their work, would we be able to send rockets to the moon, threaten each other by satellite, or make rational decisions in casinos?

The other is infinitely more important to everyone who is materially reasonably well off. That is, they add to learning, and allow us to help students educate themselves. Somehow it has become necessary to state overtly what I would have thought would have been an article of faith to all academics, that education immeasurably enriches one's life – indeed, it is the basis of what makes life worthwhile. I shall never forget the thrill, the enriching pleasure, of discovering, while still a schoolboy, Berkeley's arguments for idealism in one of Joad's popularizing books. Nor the more recent pleasure, no less keen, of understanding Russell's paradox when I came to learn about set theory.

This education is not just a source of pleasure and enrichment to those fortunate enough to experience it, but is also an asset to society in a number of ways. The great thing about education is that it enables a person to stand outside his culture and criticize and appraise it from a distance, as it were. One needs to read Bagehot, Burke, John Stuart Mill, and other political philosophers to appreciate how valuable an institution Western democracy is. So universities have rightly been regarded by governments in Britain as sources of people who can provide an objective and insightful investigation of, and suggestions concerning, society's problems. Bernard Williams's report on obscenity and film censorship, for example, combines the appreciation of the philosophical arguments for liberty with a balanced consideration of the practical issues raised.

Universities exist to educate people, not to train them. Training implies a skill in which a person can become recognizably proficient; education involves a much less recognizable end, and one at which one cannot aim directly. One can oblige people to read certain works, and education is an epiphenomenon of this reading.

Douglas Bethlehem argues that loss of tenure in our universities will jeopardize their worth as 'temples to the love of learning'. Nevertheless, academics must not abuse their privileges



Four famous "failures" who later made good: (clockwise from top left) Newton, Beethoven, Darwin and Russell.

Unfortunately, universities in Britain have allowed themselves to decline and be debased, to be subverted from the great ideal to which they should aspire. This decline must partly be blamed on the great expansion of the 1960s. Those of us who feared that more would mean worse have, to our bitter regret, been proved right. Universities have become competitive, careerist institutions. There are too many academics whose interest in learning is less than their interest in advancing their own careers. There are a few academics who simply know very little other than how to mouth fluently whatever is currently fashionable: Marx, Laing, and so on – but never logic or mathematics, which require dedicated hard work to master. There are too many academics who regard their academic posts and the substantial salaries they bring as a fallback, while their main occupation is to pursue lucrative sidelines. There are too many academics who live many miles from their universities; appearing only occasionally in their offices, because university authorities are too lax to enforce the rule that academics must live within a reasonable distance of their universities. There are a great many conferences which serve as perks for the people who attend them; at other people's expense, rather than as a necessary forum for discussion and the exchange of information. There are too many papers in the "learned" journals whose purpose is not to convey some important theory or discovery, but to swell the list of publications of the author. In order to advance his career, Professor Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* struck very near the knuckle. Academics should aspire to be more like Stuart Trece, of Bradbury's earlier and gentler satire, *Eating People is Wrong* – not

that he would stand much chance against Howard Kirk. The threat to the universities lies in the threat to tenure – the tradition by which academics, once they had passed a period of probation and a long, searching scrutiny before appointment, were not liable to be sacked, except in very exceptional circumstances. Now, of course, an academic's plea for tenure must look like pure self-interest. And I wish I could add some Swiftian observation to the effect that I could not benefit from tenure. Swift triumphantly ends his "Modest Proposal" with the statement of disinterest: "I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife long past child-bearing." But it would be moral cowardice to refuse to stand up for a great and important institution, for fear that people will "jeer at one."

Only intelligent people can understand the importance of individual liberty. There are always a great many apparently good and pressing reasons for taking it away, and the benefits it confers are abstract – until freedom is lost. How few people appreciate John Stuart Mill's essay on liberty; how greatly is a libertarian hated by bigots and zealots on all sides, by Moral Rearmament and the communists, by the governments of South Africa and Czechoslovakia.

The point about having tenure is to allow academics to pursue freely and in good faith theories and enquiries which may not only be regarded as incorrect, but as ridiculous and even wrong. The point is that there is simply no way of judging theory or inquiry as good or bad. One can think of many examples in intellectual history where knowledge and learned persons have, in

good faith rejected some good work, only for what work to be revered by later generations as the product of the highest genius. The cases of Galileo and Darwin are well-known. Newton's theory of gravity was regarded as metaphysical hokum by Leibniz. Monet's paintings were panned by the critics – the term "Impressionism" was coined as one of abuse – and so were Beethoven's quartets. The great mathematician Cantor could not get a post in a prestigious university, and published his work in obscure journals, because the mathematical establishment of his time condemned his work – and yet today he is regarded as one of the greatest geniuses of nineteenth-century mathematics, whose work has profoundly affected the conception of infinity. Bertrand Russell was dismissed from a non-tenured post, ostensibly because of his lectures; these lectures formed the basis of his *History of Western Philosophy*, a volume which has not been out of print in 40 years. Neither is "productivity" of any value in assessing the value of a person's work. Some articles in learned journals are of dubious value. And the converse also applies. In the history of my own subject, psychology, a converse case is that of Gustav Fechner. Fechner, after a long time as a fairly straight physicist, became obsessed with certain philosophical problems, and spent 10 years of intensive research into "psycho-physics". The research culminated in the publication of one small book. At a modern American university, with one slim volume, after 10 years of research, rather than several papers a year, Fechner would not last long, and the same remark may well apply to some of our universities soon. Yet Fechner's work forms the basis of modern scientific psychology. He was a great man, and one whom all academics might strive to emulate. But no such emulation could be contemplated if "productivity" is going to be made a basis for retaining a university post.

Without tenure, innovative lines of inquiry will be stifled, because we who are mediocre will not always recognize the thoughts of genius, even with goodwill. Without tenure, people will be afraid to follow certain lines of inquiry which question prevailing orthodoxy. Now, of course, no one in Britain is going to say, "you are being sacked for being unorthodox" or "you are being sacked because your political opinions are unacceptable". What will happen is that certain members of staff will realize that in the new round of cutbacks they will be the ones to get the chop if they are not recognized as the odd man out. Their colleagues will say, "well, we must cut back, and old So-and-so is pursuing nonsensical theories about gravitation", "... nonsensical theories about sets" or "... a wicked line of research bringing into question a dogma about the existence of the existence of race differences in intelligence", – and so out old So-and-so will go. After a few years, they won't have to wait for the new round of cutbacks. The tyranny of perfectly sincerely held opinions can be very great. And it is only security of tenure that enables people to stand up to a private income to stand up to the tyranny of the majority, to put new theories and pursue unpopular or unpopular research, which which our universities will soon come to resemble the "universities" of the USSR.

Naturally, there is a widespread contempt for universities and academics. We cheapen ourselves by self-seeking, we demand ever higher salaries, and we are not justifying ourselves by faithfully serving learning. We have always enjoyed in-memo advantages: security of tenure (until now); the unparalleled security of intellectual pursuit; stimulation; the happiness of work with students who are pleasant, polite, well-motivated, intelligent, idealistic, young people; and modest money. Yet our discontents have all it should have been!

Loss of traditional academic security is bound to lead to the destruction of universities. This destruction will not be obvious for a few years. The wild expansionism of the 1960s is only now being generally recognized as a potentially deleterious influence. But the destruction will be certain. And Britain will be immeasurably poorer for the loss of the great institution of its universities and their substitution by institutions of vast productivity of conformist, rote sub-scholarship, or of technical colleges. Once freedom is lost, it may be centuries before it is regained. "As good kill a man as kill a good book," said Milton, and the work of a more open kind of university which will surely result from loss of security of tenure at our universities. And it is certain that many good books will be killed before their loss of academic tenure.

Maybe it is too late. Maybe the absence of a concerted cry of outraged anguish at the very suggestion of loss of security of tenure indicates that academics are so little apprehensive of the liberty they have enjoyed, so little concerned for the ideas of a university, and so wedded to other pursuits, that it will make no difference if security of tenure is lost. Some of us did take up this problem with some ideas in mind, while there is a chance. Something must be done to retrieve the situation. I suggest that all universities academics agree to take a salary cut – the greatest part of university expenditure is on our salaries – in return for the opportunity to reduce our universities as Universities.

The author is a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Leeds.

BOOKS

Landscapes of our fathers

The Victorian Countryside
two volumes
edited by G. E. Mingay
Routledge & Kegan Paul, £25.00 per
volume or £40.00 the set
ISBN 0 7100 0734 5, 0735 3, 0736 1

by J. R. Watson

The Victorian countryside looks very like our own. Beyond the suburbs of any English city, with their avenues of safe propriety, there is an older, more permanent landscape, where the field-lines remain from the days of the enclosures, and the houses, great, medium and small, testify to a time when rank was clearly identified and deference assumed.

Of course, the landscape is not a Victorian creation: W. G. Hoskins said that Rutland was "a small part of England as she used to be before the Industrial Revolution". But in many ways the countryside which we know was shaped by the Victorians. Their churches, restored, or newly built, pepper the countryside, just as their banks, Italianate or Gothic, dominate the country towns. They invented such things as the local agricultural show, and reading Nicholas Goddard's essay on "Agricultural Societies" in this collection, one is struck at one point by a curious resemblance to Philip Larkin's poem "Show Saturday", written in the 1970s.

Perhaps the most remarkable visual difference is one which has come about only recently, in consequence of the new techniques of combine harvesting, threshing, and drying, so that the sheaves of corn no longer stand, "barbarous in beauty", as Gerard Manley Hopkins saw them. In many other respects, the land seems the same as it looks in the old photographs; indeed, part of the charm of a country village is the air which it has of a way of life that has vanished from the city.

Look more closely, as these volumes invite the reader to do, and the eye becomes less important than the skin and the stomach. The clothes, for instance: those heavy waistcoats, high-lapels, jackets, thick flannel trousers, clumsy boots; the shepherd's smock, the labourer's cap, the shopkeeper's apron, all signify something about their wearers, classify them in a way which is no longer possible. Most of the clothes were sturdy, thick, shapeless, clothes for work, defining the social status, and the job. Waterproofing was difficult, and "soaked to the skin" was an expression which had all too much meaning attached to it. In North and South, Elizabeth Gaskell noted the miseries of the agricultural labourer, often crippled through heavy work and rheumatism: to my own grandparents, who came from Suffolk villages, "arthritic" was in the blood and bones, dreaded and handed down from generation to generation. And the food: Pamela Horn quotes a shepherd's wife at

communicate. There are 44 essays, arranged in five sections, and by the end of the whole enterprise the reader feels powerfully the accumulation of factual detail and human incident. Layer upon layer, and piece by piece, the jigsaw is built up, as the picture of the Victorian countryside is presented through different eyes, allowing the inclusion of statistical detail, oral evidence, and literary insight. It is an impressive achievement, in which the individual expertise outweighs, on the whole, the reader's uncomfortable sense of having some how been collared by a committee, all of whom have plenty to say.

The first section is entitled simply "The Land". It deals with the general character of the Victorian countryside and the changes that were occurring in it, both in appearance and in the lives of its inhabitants. There were many reasons for what Professor Mingay, in his introductory essay of chairman's business, calls a "transformation" of the Victorian rural scene: two of them, the enclosure of wastes and the coming of the railways, are dealt with by Hugh Prince. "Wherever railways passed," he writes picturesquely, "houses sprang up like mushrooms in the woods"; and his account of the drainage and enclosing of waste lands made me understand the force of Gerard Manley Hopkins's cry in "Inversnaid":

O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

I had always thought those lines much less effective than the imagery which describes the stream itself in the poem. Philip S. Bagwell then deals with the coming of the railways, which ended the world of the canal, the stage-coach, and the country carrier. He points out pleasingly that the decline of rural isolation affected even such things as cricket, putting an end to the ignorance of MCC laws which allowed a Wiltshire man to be run out attempting the eleventh run.

Other changes in rural life which are discussed in this first section are crucial to an understanding of Victorian social questions. It is clear from Alan Gilbert's summary of church-chapel divisions that they were important not just in each local context but because they reflected wider conflicts.

Over compulsory church rates, education, the access of Nonconformists to parish graveyards, and over Disestablishment itself, Anglicanism and Dissent formed battle lines which acquired profound social and political symbolism by running precisely along the deepest divisions opened in the society by industrialization, urbanization and the associated development of liberal democracy.

After this kind of skilful compression and crisp delineation of the major issues, the three essays on literature and art are disappointing. The reason is, I think, that so many of the other contributions stir memories of Victorian literature – Trollope and the Victorian church, Dorothea Brooke and the model villages, Dickens's Barks and the country carriers – that to set up a special literary and pictorial subcommittee seems unnecessary.

The three contributors, two on literature and one on painting, wrestle with the difficult relationship between landscape and art, realizing that fiction is fiction and landscape is landscape, but that there is some mimetic relationship between the two in the nineteenth century, except on extraordinary occasions. As W. J. Keith points out, it would be unwise to assume that scholar gypsies might be seen on the Cumnor Hills (actually, Matthew Arnold thought this too) or that Heathcliff roamed the Yorkshire moors.

The second section of the book concerns the practice of agriculture in the nineteenth century, and deals with the ways in which



A man stooking corn in the Spalding district of Lincolnshire, taken from the second volume of the work reviewed here.

farms were worked, the crops which were sown, the machinery which was used, and the growth of interest in science as applied to agriculture. Throughout, a major conflict seems to have occurred between the old and the new: while some farmers were quick to use new machinery, like the steam threshing machine referred to by Charles Tennyson-Turner in one of his sonnets, others were suspicious of the new-fangled labourers themselves. Nicholas Goddard, in his essay on agricultural societies referred to above, gives a pleasing example of an unsuccessful demonstration with a new plough in 1843:

"Well, we are satisfied with our old ploughs now, eh, mates?" was a constant question. "Why, I think we shall go home contented" the nearly uniform answered, whilst at every turn some lusty hexagrammer was seen instructing his chubbily-faced nephews in the danger of novelty.

The third section is concerned with country towns and country industries. There is an outstanding essay on the professions by Barbara Kerr, who writes with verve and zest about clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and surveyors. She has the ability to turn the limitations of space to advantage by the use of the *mot juste* and by keeping a sharp eye open for literary evidence.

The division of the two final sections into "Landed Society" and "Labouring Life" is itself significant. Students of the Victorian period hear so much about the middle class (in undergraduate essays it is always rising and rising) that the very polarity of the labels tells us something about the different basis of country life. It indicates, as the many photographs graphically show, the wide gap between rich and poor, between those who owned the land and those who worked on it.

D. C. Moore describes the aristocracy and the landed gentry, and Jill Franklin the Victorian country house; though the most illuminating essay in this section is that on the land agent by Eric Richards. He shows the crucial part that land agents played in the management of great estates, and suggests that they were a powerful force for conservatism. However, he also accepts F. M. L. Thompson's argument that in the longrun land agents helped to accelerate the eventual disintegration of rural society, because they

replaced a direct paternalism with a bureaucratic administration. Thompson himself, in "Landowners and the Rural Community" concludes that for most country folk the landowners were remote figures, whose occasional institutional benevolence such as schools, village halls, and hospitals, did not outweigh their customary repression in such matters as the employment of gamekeepers.

The final section is the most substantial, and in many ways the most memorable. Throughout the two volumes the labouring poor have been present, but in these concluding essays their condition becomes painfully and movingly clear. Alan Hawkins quotes from *Genesis*: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread", and remarks that "to the poorest of Victoria's subjects this represented literal truth as well as a biblical punishment". Howkins's final paragraph is a terrible indictment of working conditions:

Farm work was unremitting toil in all weathers, from the sleet that accompanied winter ploughing to the burning sun of August. Harvest took a terrible toll... Old men and women, driven by poverty to work in the fields at the busiest time of the year, died of heat-stroke, and in the end many were turned off the farm crippled with rheumatism or arthritis. As one old team-man said, "They were having their own way, the farmers was, they were putting us just anywhere... they never cared whether you lived or died." Pamela Horn's essay on "Country Children" also makes the point forcibly that conditions among the rural poor were almost unimaginably severe; John Burnett's "Country Diet", and Anne Digby's "The Rural Poor", do the same. There are, of course, some heroes in this sorry catalogue of human misery: Edward Girdlestone, the radical clergyman, and Joseph Arch. These men aroused something heroic and deeply human in the rural poor, something which refused to die: these final essays celebrate man's capacity to be something nobler than his drudgery would condition him to be. Robert W. Malcolmson shows how the poor managed to preserve their recreations and conviviality, and Charles Phyllips-Adams examines something far more elusive and more interesting, the survival of rural culture. He effects a remarkable conjunction between local history and anthropology, in a brilliant and suggestive essay

which shows country people continually relating natural events to supernatural causes.

These volumes will have two main uses. In the first place, they will be a reference guide, a kind of mini-encyclopaedia of what is known about the Victorian countryside; secondly, they will be useful background reading for anyone studying the literature or thought of the period. The specialist writers are for the most part very good on their individual topics, and it would take a brave and polymathic reviewer to take issue with them; the overall effect, however, is a little like an assembly of voices rather than a single voice, and the reader misses the sense of engagement with a single mind or even a single ideology. There is a certain clash of prevailing orthodoxies, of the kind described by E. P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson listed these as being of three kinds: the Fabian orthodoxy, in which the great majority of working people are seen as passive victims of laissez faire; the orthodoxy of the empirical economic historians, in which workers, as migrants, and the data for statistical series, and the orthodoxy in which a period is racked for forerunners – pioneers of the welfare state, or progenitors of a socialist commonwealth. Although this collection of essays begins where Thompson leaves off (and does not have his antipathy towards Methodism), its differing orthodoxies are uncannily foretold in his summary. The impression of a committee at work is uneasy, and the unease is felt in a lack of a consistent ideological stance, but this is a defect which inevitably accompanies the work's virtues, the bringing together of so much material by different hands which is relevant to the understanding of an age.

The volumes are remarkably complete in their coverage: if there is something missing, it is that insufficient account has been taken of Primitive Methodism as a force in the countryside. Joseph Arch was a local preacher, and the tiny Primitive Methodist chapels, as John Kent has written, functioned as citadels from which attacks were mounted on the social and economic enemy. They can still be seen in counties such as Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and Suffolk: little Bethels standing solitary by the roadside, or near a few scattered houses. Their strange, almost alien presence is a reminder of how close the Victorian countryside is to our own, and the reaction of many readers of these two volumes will, I think, be close to my own: they speak of a world from which some of us come, from which we derive our blood and character. I am convinced of the authenticity of many of these essays not because of any academic inquiry but because they correspond to the reminiscences of a country childhood told to me by my grandparents. This is a record of the past from which we were digged: when my grandfather, the youngest of the family, left his Suffolk village in the 1880s to go to work in Ipswich, his father wept – "Joseph is not", he said, "and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." It is not an allusion which many would understand today; it shows a poor and unlettered man using the language of the Bible to reach out and express the depth of emotion that was struggling within him. It tells us much that these volumes also tell us, about the isolation of rural England, about its culture, about its depopulation. And it is this texture of country life which appears so memorably in the essays and photographs of these two volumes: behind the many academic voices, the substance of country life in the nineteenth century comes through, with its hardships, its grinding labour, its struggles to survive, and above all its resilience, its integrity, its ancient culture, and its human dignity.

J. R. Watson is professor of English at the University of Durham.

Bread and dripping was a staple diet of consumption, together with tea that had been watered again and again until it became colourless. Many became sick of a diet of pork. Only towards the end of the reign of Queen Victoria did the prices fall and allow the diet of the average labourer to become more varied and nutritious.

The texture and feeling of country life in the nineteenth century are two of the things which these volumes

BOOKS

Reassessing a 'founding father'

Stereotypes

Subject Women
by Ann Oakley
Marlin Robertson, £9.50
ISBN 0 85520 347 1

In trying to understand women's position in contemporary society, a crucial distinction is the one drawn by Ann Oakley in an earlier book between "sex" - the biological dimension - and "gender" - the social one. It is the familiar debate about the relative importance of "nature" and "nurture". To what extent do women find themselves where they do because of their biological endowment, to what extent because tradition, culture, and the rest cast them in particular roles?

Mrs Oakley acknowledges that some differences are essentially biological, including others besides the obvious ones about genital equipment and about bearing and suckling children. But such unambiguously biological explanations are few. The overwhelming evidence is that society is ordered in such a way as to reinforce established roles, encouraging in this process the belief that most of the inequalities between men and women are inevitable and irreversible.

One body of work she cites to challenge that belief is the research by anthropologists on other cultures, showing the great variety that exists in the roles allocated to men and women. She quotes Margaret Mead, for instance, who pointed out that what western cultures think of as typically "feminine" behaviour - gossiping, self-decoration and domestic crafts - is in some societies the preserve of men.

Another source used is studies of the differential treatment of boys and girls. In one small experiment (whose ethics, incidentally, might well be questioned) the same six-month-old child was dressed first as a little girl ("Beth"), then as a little boy ("Adam"); the child was perceived differently, described differently and treated differently by adults.

The analysis of children's books and television programmes shows how they buttress the same stereotypes. School teachers apparently unthinkingly judge girl and boy students by different criteria, encourage them in different ways and steer them in different directions.

Such research makes it abundantly clear that ideas about the appropriate roles for the sexes are socially learned. Mrs Oakley also provides a battery of evidence confirming that the present arrangements are unequal and unfair. An example is the familiar finding that when wives work outside the home they still usually have two jobs, their husbands merely "helping" with the domestic chores. Wives' careers and fulfilment are more often sacrificed than are those of their husbands. Power in the family remains unequally shared. And so on.

But what is to be done? One suggestion, given a sympathetic airing in this book, is to abolish or radically transform the family. Mrs Oakley sees no sign of progress towards symmetry or equality. She condemns the family as a capitalist institution, and marriage because it "oppresses, suppresses and depresses" women. The contrary view - which seems to me to tally more with the evidence - is that the family existed long before capitalism and is today, under a variety of pressures including feminism, ensuring its survival by adapting in the direction of greater variety, flexibility and even equality. But despite its lapses *Subject Women* stands as an invaluable resource, well-researched and wide-ranging, the most comprehensive review to date of women's roles.

Peter Willmott

Peter Willmott is head of the central policy unit at the Greater London Council, and co-author of *The Symmetrical Family*.

American Sociology and Pragmatism:
Mead, Chicago Sociology, and Symbolic Interaction
by J. David Lewis and Richard L. Smith
University of Chicago Press, £15.00
ISBN 0 226 47697 9

Thomas Kuhn has taught us to notice that every research tradition invents, and, in inventing, mythologizes, its origins. Symbolic interactionism is no exception.

It is usual to divide its development into two phases: the prewar era of Chicago sociology in which the theoretical writings of Cooley, Thomas and Mead coexisted in uncensored summation with the ethnographic tradition inspired by Park and Burgess, and a postwar phase in which the theoretical emphasis on the symbolic nature of selves and institutions was celebrated in a great outpouring of occupational studies by Becker, Goffman, Hughes, Freidson, Whyte and others. It is this second generation which has mythologized the first and, according to the authors of this book, its hindsight has overemphasized Mead's contemporaneous influence while simultaneously misinterpreting his contribution. Herbert Blumer is identified as the chief architect of this state of affairs.

Strikes in the United States 1881-1974
by P. K. Edwards
Blackwell, £19.50
ISBN 0 631 12518 3

In the latest of the Warwick Studies in Industrial Relations, Dr Paul K. Edwards attempts to define and explain the "shape" of American strikes. He argues that American strikes have tended to be longer than those in Britain and other comparable countries. Taking into account frequency and size, they have also been greater in "volume", and have not "withered away" since 1945 in the manner of their European counterparts. All this, Edwards maintains, is because of the intensity of the struggle for "job control" in America.

On his way to this conclusion, Edwards takes to task some of the most distinguished American authorities on US labour relations. He attacks the view that strike volume may be related to industrialization, pointing out that the theory neither accounts for strike "waves" nor establishes exactly when industrialization took place. He is no happier with the hypothesis that strike militancy was a substitute for left-wing

A Charter for the Disabled
by Eda Toplis and Brian Gould
Blackwell, £9.50 and £3.95
ISBN 0 631 12833 6 and 12748 8

The authors of *A Charter for the Disabled* assess the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, 1970, from two distinct angles. Brian Gould describes the passage of the Bill through Parliament and presents an illuminating case study of the factors which determine the fate of Private Members' Bills. Eda Toplis, on the other hand, assesses the impact of the Act on service provision; little attempt has been made to integrate the two contributions.

Toplis usefully draws together evidence from published government statistics and from the few small-scale empirical studies which have been carried out into service provision since 1970. The Act dealt with three major areas of policy: registration and the use of a voluntary register to monitor those "at risk" or as a basis for planning provision; the relationships between the Act and the expansion of personal social services available to disabled persons; access facilities, and the provision of suit-

The present essay in revisionism arises from a marriage of convenience. A product of two quite separate PhD dissertations, its authors used thoroughly disparate techniques to arrive at conclusions whose consonance permitted their joint publication. Thus, in the first part of the book, Lewis uses traditional exegetical techniques to divide the pragmatist philosophers into nominalists (James and Dewey) whose position, echoed in the writings of Thomas Cooley and Blumer, is argued to be incapable of supporting a genuinely sociological analysis of social processes, and realists (Pierce and Mead) whose views were marginal to the general nominalist thrust of Chicago sociology. Smith's use of citations gives some substance to the assertion of Mead's marginality though no explanation for it. Although Mead's courses in social psychology were well attended by sociology graduate students, his views were not extensively cited by them or their teachers. Nor, until the posthumous publication of *Mind, Self and Society* in 1934, did Mead attract the attention of a wider sociological public. Thus it was the postwar generation of Chicago sociologists, trained by Blumer, who found in Mead's writings the resources for the develop-

ment of a richly processual sociology. As they stand, these observations scarcely constitute an important addition to our knowledge of the development of symbolic interactionism. This, however, is not the authors' real mission, which is to rescue Mead (and interactionism) from the interpretative and processual nominalism imposed on them by Blumer. Since this view, according to the authors, involves a conception of individuals as agents who can "accept, reject, modify, or otherwise 'define' the community's norms, roles, beliefs and so forth", it is to be rejected as undermining "the generality of social structures, essentially leaving us only with situational and subjective phenomena" (page 25). Crude statements of this order disfigure the first six chapters of the book, seriously vitiating the discussions both of the pragmatist philosophers and of the development of Chicago sociology. At issue here is not the question of whether Mead was, after all, a nominalist or a realist. More significant is the fact that Mead's writings were both substantial and ambiguous enough to permit the "second generation" to use him as a theoretical resource while avoiding a sterile dispute which would have impeded re-

search and which was, in any case, being decisively transcended elsewhere. Mead's very ambiguity is unavoidably important in the development of interactionism and its arbitrary obliteration does a positive disservice both to the perspective and its history.

Those who have read their Kuhn will recognize the futility of trying to rewrite a research tradition simply by reinterpreting a "founding father". Certainly the considerations raised in the present volume are unlikely to undermine Mead's status as the figure-head of an exceptionally fecund research perspective. However, the real sin of this work lies in its determined attempt to set the terms of theory evaluation back many years. The nominalist/realist dispute is one which sociologists have gradually learned to recognize as valueless. We deserve better than to be embroiled in it once more. In the meantime, those seeking a sophisticated account of the development of the perspective would do well to consult Paul Rock's splendid *The Making of Symbolic Interactionism*.

John Heritage

John Heritage is lecturer in sociology at the University of Warwick.

American commitment to strike action

Politics, since he believes that American workers have been politically conservative.

Edwards uses statistical techniques to throw doubt on another theory, that the divergence of American and European strike shapes after 1945 may be related to political attitudes and government policies on each side of the Atlantic before, during and after the 1930s. Finally, he disputes the contention of a sub-group within the "New Left", that rank-and-file revolt against "institutionalized" union leadership and a consequent increase in radical militancy may have contributed to the volume of American strikes. According to Edwards, established unions never ceased to be militant, while rank-and-file workers had a job-conscious outlook.

Strikes in the United States contains over ninety tables and figures, as well as a 76-page appendix on statistical techniques. It almost suffocates from a surfeit of methodology. Like those who have purported to analyse real wages, Edwards seems to shy away from intelligible international comparisons that might be difficult to defend, preferring instead the relatively safe territory of internal changes in strike patterns. His technique lends

itself to the presentation of superficially impressive but only marginally useful information. It has also skirted some important matters as the relative strike-proneness of craft and industrial unions, and the relationship of this problem to productivity.

However, those with the patience to reconstruct for themselves Edwards's diffusely presented data will probably agree with him that American workers have been more enduringly committed to strike action than their European counterparts. In explaining this phenomenon, Edwards echoes the views of the United States' most famous labour theorist, Selig Perlman, though, curiously, Perlman is one of the authorities not cited in an otherwise erudite book. In Perlman's style, Edwards emphasizes the American employers' readiness to resist unionism. Employers were anti-union not just for economic reasons, but for ideological ones, and because they insisted on the "right to manage". That Edwards still attaches importance to this 1920s argument only emphasizes the need for a labour historian to undertake a thorough investigation of employers' attitudes towards strikes.

Turning to what he deems to be the two other important parties to industrial

disputes, Edwards first argues that the federal government in America continued to prefer, even after the New Deal, to let the pro-union strike fight it out without public mediation. Secondly, he argues that American labour leaders have continued to be exceptionally militant. Whilst he suggests that where there have been traditions of long and militant union labour leaders have had to curb their predecessors in order to protect their members' respect. Furthermore, major clashes with employers as "job control" have been necessary in order to keep alive interest in unionism in a country with no great reserve of working-class loyalty. Finally, things once again at the New Left, Edwards hints that American labour has become fully incorporated into the capitalist superstructure, and that this is why it fights so hard to get in. Over the acuity of these observations, he may be forgiven for having forgotten fourth party to American industrial disputes, the consumer.

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones

Dr Jeffreys-Jones is lecturer in history at the University of Edinburgh.

The need to define disability

able housing including the shift in emphasis from purpose-built accommodation for wheelchair users to ordinary public sector housing designed to meet the needs of most disabled persons. Toplis explores how successful the Act has been and concludes that in the last ten years personal social service provision has barely kept pace with increasing demand (especially in the case of the elderly) while the increased supply of suitable housing has made little impression on the huge documented demand.

Unfortunately Gould discusses the origins of the Bill without reference to the theories which have been advanced in recent years to explain why particular measures reach the statute book. Instead explanations for the almost entirely in terms of parliamentary procedure. Yet despite all, some unanswered questions still remain for those unfamiliar with parliamentary processes: for example, why was the Bill committed to a standing committee of the House of Commons, but in the Lords to a committee of the whole House? Who chose, and on what basis, the mem-

bers of the standing committee? Although the original Bill and the final Act are reproduced the fate of individual clauses is difficult to follow.

Gould describes the Bill as a "rag bag", and attributes its lack of coherence to the pressures on Private Members' Bills. Toplis blames its limitations on the ambiguity of the Money Resolution which committed the Government to financial support for the measure, the failure to define "need" and "the disabled", and the inability of central government to coerce local authorities. A broader interpretation might also have emphasized the importance of the Blind Persons Act 1920 which replaced poor law provision with services intended, as the Act stated, "to promote the welfare of" the blind. The Act provided the model for Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948 which not only removed those with sensory and physical handicaps from poor law care, but declared the intention of the new welfare services to be "to promote the welfare of" these categories of disabled persons.

Despite retaining the objective of local authority services for disabled

persons, "promotional welfare" was never defined, though by 1970 it had become identified with "the integration of the disabled" - an equally ambiguous notion. Inevitably Morris, Labour MP for Wythehampton and later Minister for the Disabled, was forced back on the concrete issue of individual cases of disabled persons. Underlying the Act was the assumption that all categories of physically handicapped persons could be grouped together with the mentally disabled under the generic term "the disabled", that they had common interests and needs, and therefore required common services. Only had no definition of "disability" been devised, there had been no attempt to identify the interests and needs which were common to "the disabled".

Toplis is surely right to conclude that the real importance of the Act lay in the publicity it progressed to, and the interest it aroused in the disabled.

Sally Sainsbury

Sally Sainsbury is lecturer in social administration at the London School of Economics.

BOOKS

A mental portrait of the novelist

Borges and His Fiction: a guide to his mind and art
by Gene H. Bell-Villada
University of North Carolina Press, distributed by Transatlantic Book Service Ltd, £12.35 and £6.50
ISBN 0 8078 1458 X and 4075 0

Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi
by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy-Casares
Allen Lane, £5.95
ISBN 0 7139 1421 1

The Novels of Julio Cortázar
by Steven Boldy
Cambridge University Press, £12.95
ISBN 0 521 13097 7

When - as in the case of Jorge Luis Borges in the late 1960s - an audacious, original talent bursts like a star shell in the international literary firmament, critics are often among those temporarily blinded by the dazzle. Not that this has deterred academics on both sides of the Atlantic from jumping upon a bandwagon whose size and shape are none too clear. Indeed, as Gene Bell-Villada points out in his study *Borges and His Fiction*, the number of publications relating to this author has now passed the thousand mark in twenty years.

However, despite the outpourings, such are the problems that Borges's short, stylized, bookish pieces of prose fiction pose for the critic, that there have been only a handful of useful books and even fewer good ones so far. For the general reader, approaching Borges's work probably in translation, Professor Bell-Villada's contribution will certainly prove to be among the most useful to date. Faced with explaining the writings of an author who has so often lured critics into his literary labyrinth and left them there to wander, Bell-Villada has produced a simple, readable treatment of the subject, as single-minded in its attempt at demystification as it is relentless in its determination to sift through the profusion of literary and scholarly references which characterize Borges's compressed, allusive style, and to distinguish the genuine from the deliberately spurious and ironic. At times this approach can de-

generate into a pedestrian, almost repetitive, pursuit of detail. Furthermore, the heavy emphasis on *Ficciones* and *The Aleph*, while they contain Borges's best work, does give over all a slightly unbalanced perspective.

On the credit side, the book is instructive in locating Borges within the context of Latin American and European writing, and at its most interesting in its delineation of a mental portrait of the man - his idiosyncratic, cosmopolitan tastes, and the odd array of intellectual influences which shaped his ideas: from idealist philosophy, Buddhist and Islamic religion, Jewish mysticism down to the stories of Chesterton, Stevenson and Kipling. Borges emerges as a prodigious and gifted autodidact, but with immense gaps in his background, who held tenaciously to his first boyhood interests and never "grew up" intellectually.

Professor Bell-Villada is refreshingly ready to make sympathetic value judgments on whether or not Borges successfully brings off his various efforts, and also deals understandingly with Borges's naive political stance and his gentlemanly conservatism. But he has, intentionally it seems, completely omitted from his discussion those aspects of Borges's work - such as his view of time, history and the paradigmatic repetitions of human actions - which explain his reputation of psychological development in his characters. A pity, since it is precisely in this area that much of Borges's fascination for the reader actually lies.

While Professor Bell-Villada draws attention to Borges's variations on the theme of the detective story with their sometimes perceptible Chestertonian echoes, he makes no mention of *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi*, a lighthearted collection of stories which Borges wrote in 1942 in collaboration with Adolfo Bioy-Casares under the pseudonym of H. Bustos Domecq. These are now available in English translation by the inevitable Norman Thomas di Giovanni, and show Borges's predilection for ironical story-types of Argentine society of the 1930s, and also his fascination for the solution of problems and paradoxes by logical cerebration. The detective in this case, Isidro Parodi, never moves



Jorge Luis Borges

from cell 273 in the Buenos Aires City Prison where he is serving a twenty-year sentence. Thence murderers, thieves, con men and their victims from all levels of society repair for the solving of crimes in which they are embroiled by the sedentary sleuth. Surely Borges and Bioy-Casares achieve the *reductio ad absurdum* for the genre as a whole in this slim volume.

As Professor Bell-Villada points out on a number of occasions, Borges has been a strong influence on younger South American writers who in most respects would seem to have little in common with him -

especially his politics. Yet Cortázar lays claim to a strong affinity with Borges in that both are searching for a style that will enable creativity to flourish rather than be stifled in literary rhetoric. Like Borges, his compatriot Julio Cortázar won international recognition relatively late, but with three of his novels and two collections of short stories now available in admirable English translations, Steven Boldy's *The Novels of Julio Cortázar* provides a first and very timely critical study in English of this major author. Like Borges's fictions, but for quite different reasons, Cortázar's novels make new

and unnerving demands upon the reader. Dr Boldy has examined *The Winners*, *Hopscotch*, *62*, *A Model Kit* and *Manuel's Book* in chronological order, and identifies certain common patterns ("a structural homogeneity of the texts") which can be interpreted in terms of classical myth, modern psychology and linguistic theory.

Cortázar's characters struggle with a sense of loss and a search for primordial unity within man, a resolution of the dualities of urban civilization and fundamental human nature. They are the victims of imposed patterns (*figuras*) of conduct, determined by laws, conventions, even language and literary forms, which suppress the ever present monsters of the subconscious. In their attempts to reconcile these opposite forces, the characters have recourse above all to human communication within groups or between randomly encountered individuals, which again and again demonstrate the absurdity, irrationality, and humour of life. If Borges gave to Latin American literature a sense of fun and irony, Cortázar can certainly be said to have intellectualized the comic and the zany in a way that no other writer today seems to have done. He can also create passages of the most moving sadness, especially in the first two novels examined in this book, *The Winners*, and *Hopscotch*, generally thought to be his masterpiece.

The complexities through which Dr Boldy picks an identifiable path, especially in the novel *Hopscotch* with its open ending and offerings of alternative chapters throughout, in which Cortázar virtually demands an active determining role from the reader, are formidable. That he brings us through these fraught zones of literary experience is something of a triumph, though the schematic approach he is sometimes forced to adopt seems to fragment, rather than bring together, some of the strands he has so painstakingly unravelled.

R. K. Britton

R. K. Britton is registrar of the Northern College for Residential Adult Education.

Marginal people in a technological society

Pynchon's Fictions: Thomas Pynchon and the literature of Information
by John O. Stark
Ohio University Press, £8.40
ISBN 0 8214 0419 9

Pynchon: the voice of ambiguity
by Thomas H. Schaub
University of Illinois Press, £9.50
ISBN 0 252 00816 2

A few unequivocal details do emerge from the obscurity. Thomas Pynchon was born in Glen Cove, NY, in 1937, a descendant of Hawthorne's New England Puritans. At Cornell Pynchon divided his attention between science and literature, earning a reputation for a fine and meticulous synthesizing intelligence, a quality apparent in his complex and dense novels where thermodynamics, historiography, theology and behavioural research all play a central role. After graduating in 1958, Pynchon spent the obligatory year in Greenwich Village before moving to Seattle as an editorial writer for Boeing.

Completed in Mexico and published in 1963, is a surprisingly conventional work, picaresque, satirical, influenced by the Beats, but already showing signs of Pynchon's particular concerns. Profane and Stencel are old-fashioned questers set against a background of technological dehumanization, historical coincidence and paranoia. *The Crying of Lot 49*, a compact metaphysical detective story centring on the putative existence of an underground postal system, in the interstices of historical record, advances the same depress-

ing notion that paranoia is a form of community.

Pynchon's reputation became established in 1973 when the colossal and demanding *Gravity's Rainbow* reached the *New York Times* best-seller list. Here again, Pynchon uses science in a striking way. Information theory and statistical mechanics suggest ironic tropes for the fate of individuals and for the nature of fiction itself. The German V-2 rocket's faster-than-sound approach emerges as a complex metaphor for all our latter-day inversions of "common sense": the gap between our everyday and our "scientific" grasp of reality, sexual inversion, the irresponsibility of the intellectuals, the ironic plight of marginal people in a technological society.

Pynchon remains intensely secretive about his career. There are no recent photographs, no authenticated interviews, and many of the "facts" of his life are the product of wild speculation and graduate school rumour. In the absence of biographical leverage, Pynchon's critics have cast about for new constellations of meaning. Ironically his secrecy has not directed attention to the surface of his text but rather to the seductions of origin, to the fallacy that an author can be reduced to his sources.

Academic critics have tended to read Pynchon as, *sub rosa*, one of themselves. They see him as a last modernist, heaping unshored fragments against civilization's ruins, reconstructing our artistic synapses out of technology's leavings, sealing the rift between the Two Cultures.

John O. Stark argues that Pyn-

chon's fictions constitute a "literature of information". Pynchon, he argues, organizes his fictions in three concentric circles - a core of unmediated, chaotic reality on which is superimposed a layer of "information", bound together into a self-conscious literary surface which constantly questions its own premises.

This vague Freudian structuralism disguises a serious procedural problem. In characterizing Pynchon's work thus, Stark revives suspicions concerning his critical method. His earlier study of Barth, Nabokov and Borges, *The Literature of Exhaustion*, depended on a similarly unexamined and reductive formula, on that occasion lifted from John Barth's notorious essay. Stark's argument rests too heavily on a ramshackle correlation of literary and non-literary detail. In successive chapters he discusses the coincidence of Pynchon's fictional concerns with cybernetics; with contemporary psychology; with accurate historical research; with Puritan theology; and finally with Expressionist film. However, the identification of putative sources is still not criticism and the critics have consistently failed to make a coherent and convincing case for the centrality of scientific thinking to Pynchon's imagination.

A potentially more damaging objection can be levelled at Stark's critical apparatus. Pynchon's fictions frequently reads like a resumé of previous criticism. There is no general bibliography and only a quite inadequate index (23 citations) covering no more than articles and books on Pynchon. Without belittling the difficulties of handling scientific data

in a literary context, Stark does appear suspiciously dependent on popularizations - *Cybernetics Simplified*, *Great Ideas in Modern Science* - and his argument hovers uneasily between general interpretive points and banal asides on science and technology.

Thomas Schaub avoids Stark's fashionably unitary approach in order to focus on the role of rhetorical ambiguity and reader response in the three novels. Pynchon's ambiguity resides in his determination to colonize a middle ground between what Henry Adams called "the super-sensuous chaos" of history and "the divine unity" of art itself. Schaub argues that Pynchon's is a fiction in four dimensions, obsessed with, and embodying, time in a way reminiscent of Hawthorne, Melville, and Faulkner. Here Schaub convincingly argues Pynchon's continuation, rather than disruption, of an American tradition centrally concerned with time, language, and science. Schaub concludes with a useful and suggestive examination of "Pynchon's company", those contemporaries who share his methods and top concerns. This section is especially welcome for its underlying contention that Pynchon is neither unique nor monolithic; as well as showing his kinship with Burroughs and Ishmael Reed, it directs deserved notice to neglected figures like Richard Farina, Tom Robbins, Peter Matthiessen, and the remarkable M. F. Beal.

Finally, Dr Stark's contention that Pynchon's books "are made coherent in unusual ways" is never satisfactorily argued, while Dr Schaub's

whole thesis, fundamentally more satisfactory ultimately, fails to gel. This is perhaps the result of Pynchon's conscious strategy, commenting constantly on his own rhetorical processes, subverting the metaphors of history, science, and literature. In his "Prolegomena to a Theory of Reading", Jonathan Culler attacks the notion of criticism as a cumulative discipline: "The accumulation of interpretations provokes a questioning of cumulative knowledge; it makes us unable to imagine progress except as ideological transumption". Pynchon's careful use of information in self-reflexive ways pre-empt both the critic and the critical function.

Pynchon's sole published essay, the haunting "Journey into the Mind of Watts" suggests an aspect of his work too often ignored: a literal and sympathetic concern for marginal people and their afflictions; with the inefficacy of piecemeal measures; with "the reality of Watts" as against the unreality of Los Angeles fictional space. He envisages a moral and artistic renaissance from the rubble: "In the corner was this old, biased TV set with a rabbit-ears antenna on top; inside, where the picture tube should have been, gazing out with scorching wiring threaded like electronic ivy among its crevices and sockets, was a human skull. The name of the piece was 'The Late, Late Show'".

Brian Morton

Brian Morton has taught at the Universities of Tromsø and East Anglia.

The Times Higher Education
Supplement

**Important news for
New Subscribers**

New subscribers to The Times Higher Education Supplement can now take advantage of our special introductory rate of £22.50 for a year's issues - even cheaper than buying it from your newsagent. Simply complete the coupon below and our computerised subscription service will process your order at once.

***Offer applies to new subscribers in the UK only.**

Please send me The Times Higher Education Supplement for one year. I enclose my cheque for £22.50.

Please print

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Mail this coupon with your cheque to Times Newspapers Limited Supplements Subscription Manager, Oakfield House, 35 Perymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH.

Overseas subscribers should write for information to the address above.

redacted not later than 18th September 1981 quoting the reference D738. T11512

Don's diary

Thursday

Arrived at the campsite at Dulais, Anglesey. There are 41 BED students (generalist primary and mental handicap courses), and nine tutors. Tomorrow, 70 children will arrive with seven teachers; they come from four Nottingham primary schools, from an ESN(M) and an ESN(S) school. In all, 127 people under canvas, the schools in one field and the polytechnic in another.

In the CNAA course document, the purpose is described as "experience of working with children in an environment other than school". There is no camp leader among the staff. We are near to the anarchic ideal of organization without government. Keith is responsible for the site and the finances; Pete for the tents and equipment; Jim for the food; Malcolm for transport; Jean for first aid and sports events. I am responsible for sanitation, and with John P. will be emptying the chemical loos four times a day.

Friday

Half of the tutors and students were out on fieldwork, while the other half prepared for the arrival of the children. My group of seven students is working at the Porth Wen brickworks on the north coast. This is a derelict industrial site of outstanding beauty. There are three kilns, two tall chimneys, various pieces of broken machinery, steam boilers and ruined buildings. We spent the day preparing for tomorrow.

We are in 12 domestic groups for cooking and eating. Each has a 10 ft x 10 ft tent with trestle table, trestle seats, and gas cookers. Pete drilled us all on fire precautions, and the field is dotted with fire extinguishers.

Saturday

The Porth Wen group (seven students, 20 children, one teacher and one tutor) met at 9.30 a.m. in one of the marquees after heavy rain. We sat in a circle and tried to learn each other's names; most of the kids find it easy, but I am awful at it and keep making mistakes. If you don't know each other's names, how can you work together? We set off with packed lunches in two minibuses.

The morning was spent exploring the brickworks. Each child had a small clipboard with a set of drawings and plans of the brickworks which we had run off on the duplicator yesterday. They had been told that parts of the buildings were dangerous, and that they had to look carefully at the place and note on their papers all the places that might be hazardous.

After lunch it was raining, so we sat in a circle inside one of the kilns and talked about the morning's work. The acoustics of this domed building were excellent. We discussed brick-making, and I gave a short history of the site.

We walked to Hell's Mouth. It is a most beautiful stretch of coastline, with every shade of green and brown in the vegetation and grey in the rock, plus patches of purple heather. It rained incessantly, but the kids never grumbled. Some of them still had energy for running up rocky mounds and hurling stones into the sea. When we got back to the minibuses, I was relieved to count 29 people again. We returned to camp and I collected a large pile of wet jeans.

Sunday

I took the wet clothes from yesterday's walk to a laundrette in Amlwch, and dried them for 50p in a tumble-drier. Half the camp walked to Meoleir, and the other half to Bodafon. Sing-song in the marquee in the evening.

Monday

Fieldwork day - students only. (The children are working with other groups of students.) We spent some time evaluating Saturday's fieldwork, and then visited the site to prepare for tomorrow. More handouts prepared. How could we organize with-out a duplicator? In the evening, massed football on the beach, 50-a-side. Quite a storm overnight, but only one tent blown down.

Tuesday

Half of the Porth Wen group went to Hell's Mouth to play smugglers, while the rest formed up into two task forces for a military operation, looking for pirate gold which lay hidden in the brickworks. Each task force consisted of a leader (student), deputy leader, radio operator (carrying a light tape-recorder), shipper (carrying a cardboard gun), and two troopers. Each combatant wore a red or yellow headband with an identifying letter on it; if the letter was called out by the opposing sniper, the combatant was dead. (After counting to 100, he or she could be resuscitated.) Each task force was given typed instructions ("You will be landed at 10.00 hours by helicopter and picked up at 11.00 hours") and a set of photographs of closeups of the locations of the treasure. Military training doesn't feature in primary schools' curricula (see index to the Plowden Report), but some interesting tactics were developed, even if shooting the enemy became more important than finding the loot.

Every day so far it has rained, and the lower field where the minibuses are parked is becoming so soggy that there is a danger that vehicles will become stuck. Everybody went down to the beach this evening. We formed two human chains down the cliff slope and passed up large stones for building a roadway into the field. For half an hour, 120 people worked in unison like Chinese peasants on a construction project. The able and the handicapped, young and old, male and female, black and white, working together: it symbolized the camp's ideal.

Wednesday

From 5 p.m. until 9 a.m. tomorrow I am duty tutor. Talent show by the children in the marquee in the evening. Twelve items: songs, sketches, "terrible Ted the arm wrestler" will take on all comers, conjuring tricks. The MH children who sang got tremendous applause, which is good evidence of how the rest of the camp have accepted them.

Thursday

Today every child went to Llangefni to shop in the market and swim in the pool. Three Rotillas, each of three minibuses, sallied forth. Thank goodness nobody got lost in the crowds of Llangefni market. Rain all day. Student disco in the evening in a pub in Amlwch.

Friday

Strike camp. Thank goodness for sunshine. It has been a tremendous camp. It isn't really about children and fieldwork; it's about people living together in an unfamiliar setting, relating to strangers of different ages and different abilities, making friendships, talking and thinking together, working and playing together, surviving under adverse weather conditions and enjoying it. If education is learning about life, this camp has been good education for everybody - children, students, teachers and tutors.

Michael Bassey

The author is reader in education at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham.

However much change may characterize the future, important clues to the future and the adequacy of man's capacity to respond to it may be found by looking at the past and the present. The long biological past of man is perhaps the most important place from which to start, for in it can be read clearly the successful pattern of man's ability to survive significant change in his physical environment by escaping specialization, the graveyard of other species. He did this through the use of his brain. Loren Eiseley describes the significance of that accomplishment: "After three billion years of biological effort, man alone has seemingly evaded the oblique trap of biological specialization. He alone has done so by the development of a specialized organ - the brain - whose essential purpose it was to evade specialization."

This biological capacity of man is important in light of the fact that the first and most important assumption we can make about the future is that it will be radically different from the present and the past. The rate of change in our modern environment is accelerating. Change will have a marked impact on our lives in terms of what we think and how we live. Margaret Mead stated the proposition classically when she suggested: "No man will do his major work in the world in which he was born nor die in the world in which he has worked to maturity." This means that for the first time in human history, ideas will have a shorter lifespan than people. Therefore we must be asked to change our fundamental ideas about ourselves and our society and our work at least once during our lifetime.

The lessons of man's biological past as applied to that future are real and not abstract - even if they must be applied culturally and socially rather than physically and biologically. One lesson is that specialization and particularization are the trails of the dinosaur - the paths to extinction. In our rapidly changing future, survival will lie not in the direction of specific technological response to change, but rather in the ability to deal with ideas, to conceptualize from the particular to the general and back, to apply theory learned from one body of data to another. By learning the application of general principles, man need not be trapped by changing specifics.

The issue is not only man's survival, however, but also his ability to flourish and continue to grow - to find satisfaction in life and to add in

In favour of a general education



George Rainsford

his own time to its quality. For this, man must cultivate the traits of mind and spirit characteristic of those who have achieved a consistent view of themselves and the complex changing physical and social world in which they live. When this is coupled with a sense of continuity between the past and the present that comes through understanding the history of man and his accomplishments, it will be possible to escape the desperate sense of rootlessness and loss of identity which otherwise might characterize the future as it has already come to characterize the present.

The arguments favouring a general education as preparation for work in the future are the same as those for preparation for life. The training for a particular niche in society is valuable in direct relationship to the likelihood that the niche will remain economically or technically viable. However, with the high impact of technological change on jobs, there is an increasing likelihood that a specific job trained for during formal education may no longer be there when the applicant gets to the job line. Conversely, there is a growing likelihood that the first job a young person has may not even have been discovered during the period of formal schooling.

Thus, an understanding of the

principles of mechanics or of economics will be a better preparation for that world than knowledge of the technical application of any one of these laws or principles. In the long run, underemployment or unemployment is going to be much more a characteristic of the specialist than of the generalist. A general education is the best insurance against the need to shift careers due to technological change. It is also the best preparation for a shift in career by choice, because of changed personal interests or needs.

In the world of employment, a person with a general education has an additional advantage. He or she is more likely to have a creative impact on the job held - to change, mould or advance it - while the technically educated person is more likely to find his work impacting on him. This advantage brings increased job satisfaction. The generally educated person is more apt to take the longer view of the working life - to think of the first job as a first step in a career.

The biological lessons of man's past have implications here as well. The animals that take the longest to mature - are the most advanced. The more specialized organisms mature early and die early. So it is with the learning curves of man. Those with the highest wish for immediate gratification are those least interested in education either for life or for work. High entry jobs, particularly blue collar jobs offering a high hourly starting wage, often lure an earlier and lower salary peak but do later entry white collar jobs with lower starting salaries.

Finally, the liberal arts general education seeks to increase the number of people competent to think creatively and to act responsibly. These leaders often act in a volunteer capacity, making decisions that are more important than those in their field of major activity when their lives are made. This is true, for example, when a banker becomes chairman of a city or a lawyer becomes chairman of the United Fund. These social institutions, with their tremendous range of aims, objectives and philosophies, requires for leadership a kind of person the liberal arts general education seeks to produce. They are men and women capable of continued growth, capable of judgment and improvement, and capable of taking up the world's tasks as a personal and individual challenge.

men, from time to time, understand that protecting their clients from harm doesn't come into it; if you are taking industrial action, whether publicly on the streets or secretly below the water line, the object of the exercise is to inconvenience and hurt people. That's what power is all about, whether exercised by the Government, or by those attempting to change its policies. It is a reality of which I have often heard from academics insufficiently aware.

So, what arguments ought the universities to be using? First, I believe the vice chancellors should try to achieve a little more consensus among themselves about what criteria should be used and how decisions should be made. At what levels of local, regional, national unemployment? Universities are now crucial employers of labour. What about studies on industrial generation and the part particular universities can play in that?

Finally, there is the whole question of university autonomy and UGC machinery. Do we really want to go through the whole exercise of 1982, and subsequent years? Is it sensible for the UGC to work under a bushel for months and months and then suddenly go public in June and July? Have academics any business doing the government's dirty work for it? To these questions, the vice chancellors' answer was broadly yes. I hope the debate gathers pace over the long parliamentary and academic vacation, so that when Mr Caccia (if indeed he is still there) returns he will be scrutinized in the autumn, not on the record to form the basis of that scrutiny.

Christopher Price

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The future of higher education in Northern Ireland

Sir, - You reported that the Chilver Committee in its forthcoming recommendations will propose the downgrading of the New University of Ulster from university status (THES, July 10). This report was neither confirmed nor denied in last week's issue, but, somewhat surprisingly, left hanging in the air to bewilder further all those connected with tertiary education in Northern Ireland.

At the moment your pages are full of arguments about threatened vast changes in mainland universities, and NUU's future may seem a matter of small significance which does not deserve very much space. But there are reasons for thinking otherwise. A serious issue seems to be involved over and above politics and economics which is of direct educational interest, and which is not being properly understood: the nature of university research and university teaching. This is the question that is most central to NUU, and which the larger debate about the British university system as a whole must not obscure. It is important that second-rate thinking on the issue should not lead to an unwise decision with results which will be worse for all concerned.

NUU was controversially placed, and is hampered by civil war, and has battled against other academic pressures in the province. Through all difficulties it has stuck to its proper work. Now the results of its new ideas in education, its research and fresh teaching approaches in the humanities and some outstanding projects undertaken in the sciences are beginning to get its name well known in the learned

world, and after a slow start its numbers are showing signs of picking up encouragingly. None of this is far as I know by anyone fit to judge, nor could a denial of it stand up to close fair analysis of the facts.

The university is criticized, however, it seems, for being small, and we are small. But we are growing and there are ways of speeding up the desirable process. Overspill students and courses from Belfast could be sent elsewhere of Northern Ireland. Courses, which have happened in the past, could be temporarily discouraged. Unplaced but qualified students from the Republic could be attracted by a reasonable negotiation over fees. The Derry Foundation Course could be massively expanded and if proper funding were supplied to do it, and from that scheme a substantial increase in NUU student numbers would follow since they are growing already. These are initiatives moderately beyond the vision of long as such planning is looking for the best not the easiest answer, and is accompanied by a receptive awareness of the needs of the Ulster community and the capability of the universities which serve it. They are none of them steps which the university at Coleraine could authorize on its own, but they are all possible real helps in the present difficulty. Similar courses of action exist, not particularly hard to be found by an inquiring mind, and well worth exploring.

Of course the Chilver Committee cannot be unaware of these aspects of the matter, and will be expected

to include a discussion of them in its report. It will not be wise though to deflect attention from the ways in which NUU can be helped and encouraged to concentrate everyone's energies on killing it off. Here some cause for anxiety seems justified. Your report that Chilver is to announce that he judges the university to have failed because it is 2,000 strong and not yet 3,000 or 4,000, if true, suggests that the way he and his colleagues propose to test university work, and assess the kind of success which attends it, is the bizarre one of counting bodies on the campus and disregarding minds. It is what the indications suggest, though it seems unbelievable. One could invent no surer way than this of rendering his report discreditable one hopes that the leaks are misreported and that the discussion has been conducted on an appropriately high intellectual level.

If you feel able to print this letter you will air a necessary aspect of the NUU question, now in the balance. In addition you may also bring a certain amount of comfort to those academics and others at Salford, Aston, Bradford, Stirling and the rest who are finding themselves suddenly at risk in the middle of a long vacation when at least they have time to assimilate the shock. What they have been suffering for some weeks we at Coleraine have coped with for more than a year, and have done our work at the same time, and will continue to do so.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN McVEAGH,
Senior Lecturer in English,
New University of Ulster

Engineering education

Sir, - I have just read with interest the recent statement made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on engineering education. The presentation of this statement seems to have been carefully chosen to be at a time when most academic staff have departed for their vacation and thus comment is likely to be limited.

Whilst there is much in the statement which I and my colleagues on the CEP would applaud, it does seem to have been written as though the Polytechnic Engineering Conference at Trent Polytechnic, and subsequent discussions, had never taken place. This is most surprising since it will be remembered that the DES were the conveners of the conference.

Both the national conference and the Trent conference rejected B Tech as a title for an alternative degree and the polytechnic conference suggested two educational routes (1 & 2) to engineering formation. No doubt the Minister would claim that he has not closed the door on these suggestions, but the resurrection of an award only for technical level seems completely to ignore the informed comment which has been made since last October.

While we acknowledge that in the present financial climate the number of extended engineering courses may need to be limited, the Government need not, however, set the limit too low.

Yours faithfully,
G. A. BATTERSBY
Secretary, Committee for Engineering in Polytechnics, Thames Polytechnic, Wellington Street, London SE18 6PP.

Overseas fees

Sir, - In its coverage of evidence to the overseas development select committee (July 24) John O'Leary confuses two quite separate fee support schemes for overseas students, the DES funded overseas research students fees, support scheme administered by the CVCP, and the ODA funded fee support scheme, administered by the British Council. Such confusion is entirely understandable (and shared by many, even within Government) in view of the similar names of the two schemes and the fact that they are both restricted to postgraduate students.

What we were seeking to point out in our evidence was that the ODA/British Council fee support scheme, which is developmentally orientated, is not meeting the hardship which it was designed to alleviate because it has such restrictive terms of reference. It also runs the danger of competing against the DES/CVCP scheme for students instead of being complementary to that scheme, as should be the case. The DES/CVCP scheme has always been geared to maintaining British University research programmes.

Over £200,000 of the funds available under the ODA/BC scheme remain unallocated for 1980/81. If the Government is as ready to ameliorate the consequences of the fee increases as Mr O'Leary's report implies, that money should immediately be diverted to final year overseas undergraduates in hardship. For future years the scheme could then be developed as an important and cost effective means of enabling more students from the developing world to attend British institutions. Whatever the exact percentage change proves to be - and changes

of definition complicate the issue - it is a strange twist of logic that leads Government officials to say that a 23 per cent reduction in overseas student enrolments in 1980/81 compared with 1979/80 is rather less of a drop than expected. One wonders what level of decrease has to take place before there is a realization that a review of policy is both urgent and overdue.

Yours faithfully,
RUPERT BRISTOW,
Executive Secretary,
United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs.

Union view

Time to stop passing the buck

As is known, the universities have been set home students quotas for 1983/84, but the whole subject is shrouded in mystery.

In reply to a parliamentary question the Government has stated that this is not a matter for the select committee but for the University Grants Committee. In a press statement earlier in the year, however, the Secretary of State said that universities could take in as many students as they felt were within their academic resources. But in this past year the UGC has financially penalized those universities which took in more than their student target numbers.

The real question is: what is to happen in the future? The Government denies responsibility and the UGC says it doesn't really know. There are no student target figures fixed for 1981/82 but merely for the year 1983/84 and if universities fail to comply with the target numbers set there is no way of finding out whether or not they will be penalized in any way. It is recognized that they will not get more money than provided for by the cash limit system. However, if in certain subjects universities are prepared to take more students in the knowledge that their academic standards will not be seriously lowered, why is the UGC hesitant in stating that this can be done?

The attitude of the Association of University Teachers is that it is important, certainly for this year, to take in their normal student entry and not to turn away any able and willing student who has applied for a place on a particular course. This

AUT

will have a twofold effect. First, it will continue to give university education in accordance with the Robbins principle at a time when more and more 18-year-olds are going to languish on the dole. Second, it will enable some cash flow income to be generated by universities - especially those which have been hardest hit by the recent Government cuts. From reports we have seen, universities are floating all over the place on this issue.

Everybody seems to be passing the buck to everyone else. The AUT has done all the questioning it can and has come to the conclusion that unless universities run riot by taking huge numbers of students over and above their target quotas then the risk of a future financial penalty is well worth taking.

It is not good enough for senates to remain supine in the face of the drastic advice given by the UGC and blandly accept that student intake must be cut, that departments must be run down and that there must be a decrease in teaching in certain disciplines. Ways and means can be found and must be found of avoiding this situation.

We in the AUT have pressed for the ending of the double cut in university finance; we have written to all the Commonwealth High Commissioners to ask that the overseas student fee problem be placed on the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference agenda in the autumn; we have taken legal action against three institutions about to cast off staff and take hurried decision in line with UGC advice.

Why should it be left to the AUT alone? It's time that both the UGC and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals started to make public positive proposals to the Government to get the universities out of the mess in which they find themselves. Unless they do, theirs will be the responsibility.

Laurie Sapper
The author is General Secretary of the Association of University Teachers.